

A Structural Analysis of Myths from  
the North-East Frontier of India.

James Mackie Wilson



ProQuest Number: 10731595

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10731595

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

## ABSTRACT

---

The underlying theme of this analysis is the contradiction, which it is the function of the myths to emphasise, between two meanings of the concept of humanity. Humanity may mean the capacity of man to identify himself with the other, which is the condition of his passage from Nature to Culture. It may also refer to symbolic thinking, to all man's works and conscious elaborations. This involves the distinction of the self from the other, and may tend to identification with the self alone.

The myths deal mainly with marriage-exchange. They are analysed in relation to the systems of marriage preferences of the tribes concerned. The sociological code of marriage is correlated with a zoological code of man's relations with animals. Relations in marriage governed by nature and those governed by culture are homologous, in the myths, to relations with different species of animals.

Ambivalent animals represent the ambivalence of allies, for allies are friends who were enemies. Two schemes of mediation are analysed. In one, the mediation by the dog between man and animals is homologous to the mediation by allies between the kin-group and outsiders. In the other, the mediation by pigs and fowls is homologous to the mediation by children between the kin-group and its allies.

The integration by opposition in exchange is correlated, by the myths, with the integration of nature by periodicity. The myths of natural periodicity enable a tentative correlation to be made between a difference in the mythical systems of two neighbouring tribes and the difference in their marriage systems. Generalised exchange among the Hrusso is accompanied, in their myths, by an emphasis on unions between ~~close~~ marital and sexual partners. Among the Bugun, there is restricted exchange, and, in their myths, emphasis on unions between distant partners.

The underlying theme is also elaborated through the analysis of the myths of periodicity in nature. The myths emphasise the danger of taking either aspect of humanity to excess.

CONTENTS

---

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE THE LOWLY HUSBAND	18
Part One.Reluctant Reciprocity	30
Part Two.The Benevolent Giver	41
Part Three.The Two Tigers	57
CHAPTER TWO THE COMPLETE WIFE	65
Part One.The Earthly Waters	65
Part Two.Beauty and the Beast	88
Part Three.The Evil Spirits	100
CHAPTER THREE THE GIRL NO ONE WANTS	143
Part One.The Rhythm of the World	144
Part Two.Poetic Justice	154
Part Three.The Golden Age	160
Part Four.Life and Death	166
Part Five.World out of Order	174
Part Six.Balance in Society	180
CONCLUSION	192
Bibliography	202
Index to Myths	206



## INTRODUCTION

### I - Notes on the Peoples and Sources

The North-East Frontier Agency extends over 30,000 square miles in the Assam Himalayas. The Assam plains are to the south, and the territory is bordered by Bhutan to the west, the Tibetan and Sikang regions of China to the north and east, and Burma to the south-east. It is hard country to live or to travel in, for it is wild and mountainous, with many forests and numerous streams and rivers. The rainfall is very heavy, and only partially governed by the monsoon. "This has made it very difficult to live in NEFA, and only about half a million singularly hardy people do so." (Elwin, 1959 (3), p. 6). There is, however, one major compensation, that "there are no landlords, no lawyers, no money-lenders, no liquor-vendors, merchants only in the foothills, and there is none of the economic impoverishment, the anxiety and the corruption that such people have brought to other, more accessible, tribal areas." (Ibid., p. 7)

This thesis concentrates on the populations of the Western and central parts of NEFA, and, in particular, on those of Kameng Frontier Division, an area bordered by Tibet and Bhutan. Like all the tribes-people of NEFA, these are of Indo-Mongoloid stock and speak languages of the Tibeto-Burman family. Their societies are divided into patrilineal, exogamous, groups. Their subsistence is derived, in the main, from shifting cultivation. The main focus is on the myths of two small tribes of Kameng, the Bugun and the Hrusso, and, to a lesser extent, on the Sherdukpen of Kameng, and two peoples of Siang F.D., in Northern Central NEFA, the Minyong and the Bori.

Between the three Kameng tribes there is clear evidence of political and economic links. (Elwin, 1958, p. 433, 435; Mills, 1947). The Bugun (also known as the Khowa, Khawa, Niggiya or Nigye) are a poor people, to some extent subservient to their neighbours. But they are good cultivators, and grow rice (Mills, 1947), which neither the Hrusso

nor the Sherdukpen can grow in any quantity. They live in seven villages and have a population of about 1,500.

The Hrusso (also known as Aka) live in twenty-one villages and number about 2,000 (Sinha, 1962, pp. 1-2). They feature quite prominently in the history of the British occupation, mainly because of the exploits of Taghi Raja, the leader of one of their divisions. He seems to have attained a degree of hegemony over the whole tribe and also over parts of neighbouring tribes, during his feuds with the British in the second half of the 19th century.

The Sherdukpen (also known as Senjithongji) live in three large villages and number 1,200 (Sharma, p. 1). Their land is higher and more barren than that of the Bugun and the Hrusso, although their agricultural techniques are more advanced, for they use oxen to plough some permanent fields. They make an annual migration during the winter months to the Assam Plains, to trade and to escape from the hard weather. All three tribes have been influenced to some extent by Tibetan Buddhism, but the Sherdukpen seem to have incorporated it more fully into their beliefs. They are closely linked with the Buddhist tribe of Monpas, whose territory contains the large lamasery of Tawang. "The Sherdukpen religion is a curious blend of Buddhist and local beliefs. The people venerate the Buddhist spiritual leaders and worship in the Gompas which have images of Lord Buddha and his disciples. They also have a good deal of faith in their own local deities and spirits." (Sharma, p. 72).

The Minyong and Bori are sub-groups of a larger group of tribes, known collectively as the Adis (formerly called the Abors). The Minyong live in about seventy villages, and number about 17,000. (Elwin, 1956, p. 437). The Bori are a much smaller population, who act as middlemen in trade between the Minyongs and tribes to the West. The Adis have always been independent and suspicious of strangers. Their culture and religion has been little influenced from outside.

The myths are all taken from Verrier Elwin's "Myths of the North East Frontier of India". The method which Elwin followed in their collection is favourable to analysis. It was to translate them on the spot, as they were narrated or interpreted, and to translate literally, without insertion of any new symbol or image. It may, perhaps, be assumed that Elwin's assistant, Shri Sundarlal Narmada, who collected the Bugun and Hrusso myths, followed the same method. At any rate, Elwin states that he personally verified most of these. (Elwin, 1950, pp. x-xi). The Bugun myths recorded are more valuable, in one respect, than those of other tribes because a larger number of variants are given.

Other ethnographic material has unfortunately proved poorer than at first hoped. Although it has been attempted to link the myths firmly to their ethnographic context, by using to the full what was available, the most vital conclusions have often been reduced to mere hypotheses. In particular, it is regrettable that Elwin's proposed second volume, in which he hoped "to give much more introductory material, and in particular a full account of the various tribes," was never published. The main sources have been the works on the Hrusso, Sherdukpen and Padam-Minyong in the "People of NEFA" series. Since this series is only intended to be introductory, its information is not entirely adequate. Apart from a few scattered references, the only material on the Bugun is Sinha's short article on their kinship terminology. Without these works, however, analysis would have been impossible in any form.

Early histories and reports which have been investigated contain little ethnographic material on these tribes. This is even more the case with the modern travel and political books. Searches of the reports and proceedings of the British Government in India (available in the India Office Library) also proved negative. A diary of an expedition into Aka country in 1913-14, written by R. S. Kennedy, yielded some information, though Kennedy's "Ethnological Report on the Akas, Khoas, and Mijis, and Monbas of Tawang", could not be found. The only other manuscripts traced were the papers of J. P. Mills in the Pitt-Rivers Library. These contained no reference to his tours in the Kameng area. Material in India may well allow the analysis to be pursued further.

## II

The desire to understand myth and to comment on it, without reducing its unique qualities in the process, leads by itself to Lévi-Strauss' method of structural analysis. Unlike any of his predecessors, who have tried to make sense of myth in the anthropological perspective, Lévi-Strauss does not reduce the field by seeking for true versions. His method does not discard those myths or parts of myths, which either do not accord with social reality, or do not seem to refer to social relations at all. Structural analysis of myth, even in its present state of infancy, uses the complexity of the mythological field—its reduplication and variation of themes and levels—as a means to make myths comprehensible.

The search for the meaning of myth, by one who does not belong to the culture concerned, who belongs in fact to a culture without myths, must be for a meaning which is comprehensible to him and to members of his own culture. This may lead on to an explanation of why Western industrial society does not have myths. It must lead on to some explanation for the multitude of links, perceived even at a cursory glance, between myths of cultures widely separated in both time and space. To make sense of myths in terms of one's own culture, and to make sense of the links between myths, is equivalent to the task of all anthropology, in relation to any aspect of society. Since the anthropologist investigates cultures very different from his own, there is always an assumption underlying his research, even though this is not admitted, that there exist common conditions by which the practices and representations of different cultures may be mutually translatable.

For Lévi-Strauss, the quest for these conditions is the main task of anthropology, or, rather, of ethnology. Their existence is the means by which ethnology becomes possible, and to discover their nature is the distant goal of structuralism. "Et puisque pour lui (the ethnologist), homme d'un milieu social, d'une culture, d'une région et d'une période de l'histoire, ces systèmes représentent toute la gamme des variations possibles au sein d'un genre, il choisit ceux dont la **divergence** lui

semble la plus accusée, dans l'espoir que les règles de méthode qui s'imposent à lui pour traduire les systèmes dans les termes du sien propre et réciproquement, mettront à nu un réseau de contraintes fondamentales et communes." (Lévi-Strauss. 1964. p. 19). For Lévi-Strauss, these conditions of mutual translatability lead directly to the unconscious constraints which are the natural and determined part of man's thought and are common to all mankind.

One rule is essential to following the structuralist method. The analyst must attempt to keep as close as possible to the myths themselves. He must engage in a direct dialectic with them. For the first level on which the conditions of mutual translatability appear is between the analyst and the material. There is also the consequence that, if the analysis succeeds in any measure, it does reveal these conditions, or at least it reveals that they exist. This itself indicates that there is an element in the mind which is common to very different cultures, which is determined, because the myths cannot elaborate their themes without constantly returning to the same place, and which is unconscious, because, outside the "ethnographic experience", one is not aware of its existence. The common unconscious structure of the mind begins to be accepted.

This is more convincing in the analysis of myth than of any other aspect of society. For myths are primarily concerned with the mind itself and this is why Lévi-Strauss has chosen them as the privileged field for the structuralist method. Mythology has no evident function; it receives no orders from a reality with greater objectivity than its own. In myth, the mind is free to abandon itself to its own spontaneous creativity. "L'esprit, livré au tête-à-tête avec lui-même et échappant l'obligation de composer avec les objets, se trouve en quelque sorte réduit à s'imiter lui-même comme objet... il nous suffira d'avoir acquis la conviction que si l'esprit humain apparaît déterminé dans ses mythes, alors a fortiori il doit l'être partout." (Ibid. p. 18).

The discovery of the conditions of translatability eventually allow the comparison of myths from widely separated cultures. Links which appear between these suggest an internal and logical nature, rather than external contact. But it is only possible to move to this stage if, at the

beginning, there has been a firm anchorage in myths from populations between which historical or geographical links exist. Because of its limited scope, this thesis has not moved far beyond this first stage. It is the secondary stage at which the conditions of translatability appear, the primary stage being between the analyst and the material. But even in the limited field of the "closed group" of myths from populations with external links, the conditions which appear may be applied generally.

This thesis remains, throughout, firmly anchored to external reality in another way. At the beginning of all structural analysis, each myth must be related to its ethnographic background. This is, as it were, the paradigmatic chain, which throws light on the parts of the syntagmatic chain of the myths. (Cf. Lévi-Strauss. 1966. p. 305).<sup>(1)</sup>

This is related to the nature and function of myth, as a means of communication. Myth operates through a code, and transmits a message. The analyst attempts to decipher this code. Decipherment is only possible on the basis of the repetition within the communication. Since myth is metaphor, it has the unrestricted ability to repeat its message, and this gives ample scope for decipherment. Structural analysis depends on "cutting up" the myth into those parts which display patterns of affinity. Instead of the whole myth being read successively, sections can be placed together, and seen as separate wholes. Myth is a system of signs, but it is more than ordinary language. It combines within it the properties of "la langue" and "le parole"; it is in both reversible and non-reversible time. The constituent units of language are relations; those of myth are bundles of relations. These bundles of relations are the parts of the myth showing patterns of affinity. They may be read synchronically, while between them one still reads diachronically. There is an analogy with an orchestral score. In its raw state, a myth is like an orchestral score would be, if it were rendered in one unilinear series. The myth can be ordered to be read as an orchestral score is in reality: diachronically on one axis, and synchronically on the other. (Lévi-Strauss. 1968. pp. 209-213).

In practice it seems that the achievement of this process is only possible by taking into account the message of the myth at the same time. The message of the myth is derived from its function, which is itself only apparent in relation to the ethnographic background. The message and the code are reciprocally implied. The message, which is found by attending to the ethnographic background, helps to reveal the code, and the code, found by "cutting up" the myth, helps to reveal the message. And both may often appear only by comparison between myths.

This survey of the method cannot proceed therefore without first explaining the function of myth, as seen by structural analysis. Essentially, the function is to deal with problems arising in social life, problems brought about by contradictory or conflicting tendencies, ideas, beliefs or practices. The contradictions may not be those of the society which has made the myth, for myths also refer to the beliefs and practices of neighbouring societies. Lévi-Strauss states that " . . . the purpose of the myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction." (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, p. 229). It is revealing to compare this statement of the function of myth with that of Malinowski, that myth is "a charter for social action". According to both formulations, myths seem to be a means by which a society is enabled to "keep going", without any radical changes in its structure. If contradictions are overcome by myth, the society is relieved of the necessity to change itself in order to eliminate them.

There is, however, an essential difference in Lévi-Strauss' formulation. In the first place it takes into account that the myth operates on a different plane and by a different means to ordinary social practices. It operates in the mind, through the modality of metaphor. Secondly it shows that myths deal with social life in its negative aspects. It operates in a different realm from ordinary thought, and it deals with those aspects of social life which ordinary thought cannot contemplate, except at a permanent risk of destroying the on-going process of the society.

It is suggested that the real "solution" of the conflicts and contradictions which myth brings about lies, not in the mythical overcoming of contradictions, but in the very fact that it treats of them at all. For to do so it must admit that they exist. Lévi Strauss makes exactly this point in his analysis of "La Geste d'<sup>A</sup>Asdiwal". The contradiction which he sees at the root of the Asdiwal myth is that between matrilineal descent and patrilocal residence, which matrilateral cross-cousin marriage fails to resolve. "But the failure is admitted in our myths, and there precisely lies their function." (in Leach, 1967, p. 28).

In dealing with contradictions, by whatever process, the myths allow the mind to admit them. If there are two conflicting tendencies or ideas in social or individual life, the contradiction between them exists only as long as they cannot be admitted together in the mind, that is, so long as they are kept apart. Once they are brought together in the mind by the admission of the contradiction, the mind is freed from the stalemate imposed by their contradictory state and is able to proceed on its course.

It seems that since the focal point of myths is the unconscious mind, it is here that the contradictions are admitted. Contradictions are consciously elaborated in the myths, for myths are part of conscious communication and symbolic thinking. But whatever metaphors represent the contradiction in the conscious elaboration, the unconscious is brought, by the representation alone, to admit it. Myths say, in metaphor, what cannot be said in any other way, because metaphor is the only means by which the conscious can speak to the unconscious. The hearer of the myth is led by it to his own unconscious, and the truths which the unconscious accepts are those signified by the conscious elaboration of the myth. In other forms of communication the sender decides what the message shall be. In myth, as in music, the receiver decides, for he sees himself, the truth of his own unconscious mind, signified in the message:



"Dans l'un et l'autre cas, on observe en effet la même inversion du rapport entre l'émetteur et le récepteur, puisque c'est, en fin de compte, le second qui se découvre signifié par le message du premier: la musique se vit en moi, je m'écoute à travers elle. Le mythe et l'oeuvre musicale apparaissent ainsi comme des chefs d'orchestre dont les auditeurs sont les silencieux exécutants . . . la musique et la mythologie confrontent l'homme à des objets virtuels dont l'ombre seul est actuelle, à des approximations conscients (une partition musicale et un mythe ne pouvant être autre chose) de vérités inéluctablement inconscientes et qui leur sont consécutives."  
(Lévi-Strauss, 1964, p. 25)

### III

The paradox of the relation of the conscious to the unconscious may be clarified only by considering structuralist theory as a whole. It is unavoidable because of the complexity of Lévi-Strauss' theory that this brief summary will be oversimplified and confused. Lévi-Strauss' concept of the unconscious is derived from his view of the passage from nature to culture, and on it is based his fundamental goal, the achievement of a "new humanism". The consideration of this concept returns to the problem of the role of the ethnologist, posed at the beginning. The structuralist viewpoint and method will be evaluated in the light of the critique of Yvan Simonis. From the juxtaposition of the theory and its criticism, it is hoped that a synthesis will emerge, which will elucidate the problem of the meaning of myth, and at the same time provide a view of the meaning of structuralism. The two are inseparable.

The outline of the theory is also based on Simonis' exegis.

Lévi-Strauss sees the passage from nature to culture in the terms expressed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. With the appearance of society was produced a triple passage, from nature to culture, from sentiment to knowledge, and from animality to humanity. This implies the attribution to man of the faculty to pass between these contradictory states; by the very fact of becoming conscious, he can convert himself from one plane to the other. This faculty is "la pitié", "l'identification a l'autrui". (Simonis, 1968, pp. 135-6). This identification with the other is also the means by which man can distinguish himself from the other, and perceive all the differences between things upon which the possibility of becoming conscious rests. In Rousseau's doubt: "Ai-je un sentiment propre de mon existence, ou ne le sens-je que par mes sensations", Lévi-Strauss discovers his view of its foundations, "lequel réside dans une conception de l'homme qui met l'autre avant le moi, et dans une conception de l'humanité qui, avant les hommes, pose la vie." Rousseau expresses the truth that "il existe un 'il' qui pense en moi, et qui me fait d'abord douter si c'est moi qui pense." (cited by Simonis, ibid.)

The passage from nature to culture brings about a humanity, which still has its roots in nature. The human being has a perception of "the other" in "the self" which is inextricably linked with the capacity to distinguish between the two. It is on this that the basis of the human sciences, and particularly ethnology, rests. The only means by which I can understand others is through the "other" in myself. The ethnologist observes himself through observing others, that is, he arrives at "the other" in himself, which is the basis of the mutual translatability between cultures, and of the unconscious structure of the mind. The ability to become conscious was an attribute of man in the state of nature, it is still present in social man, in his unconscious, since it is the sole condition of his being conscious. The natural is present in the social.

To forget this natural condition of man's consciousness, to forget the identification with the other, is to identify oneself with oneself alone. In this Lévi-Strauss sees the source of the exploitation of man by man, of societies by other societies, and of the rest of the world by mankind. The aim of structuralism is to return to man's beginnings, to the very first consciousness of the identification of the self with the other and their distinction. In this way it hopes that it will bring about a synthesis of identification and distinction.

It can be known that man's link with the natural is still present in his unconscious. For in art, and particularly music, an inversion is brought about between the self and the outside world, which is only possible through "l'identification a l'autrui". This is the meaning of the passage quoted at the end of the second part of this introduction. In music, as in myth, there is an inversion of the relation between the emitter and the receiver. The hearer discovers himself signified in the message of the communication which is outside him; he sees his unconscious mind signified in the music, and his unconscious "plays" within him.

Simonis argues that Lévi-Strauss cannot succeed in revealing the structure of the unconscious mind, according to the terms which he has specified for himself. Structuralism finds its privileged field in myth and in music, because these communicate the truth of man's links with nature to his unconscious mind. But it is not the conscious elaboration of myth and music which are of interest, for they are only approximations, and obstacles to the truth, which is unconscious. It is in the communication of the myth and the music to the unconscious, when they make the unconscious mind play in the hearer, in silence, that the truth is revealed. If structuralism wishes to talk about the unconscious mind directly it can only do so at the expense of becoming silent. It cannot make the unconscious structure of the mind manifest to the conscious. "Il montre au langage-comme à toute oeuvre humain - qu'il porte le silence en lui, qu'il porte ses origines en lui, qu'il porte en lui son lien a la nature et que ce lien est silencieux. Silence, mais silence

consacré à la musique." (Simonis, 1968, p. 311).

Structuralism reduces the whole field of "symbolic thinking" to its "function". This function is the truth of man's links with nature. The rest is treated as meaningless, as "mana", and left aside. For all this conscious elaboration, which is symbolic thinking, is an obstacle to man's links with nature. (Ibid., pp. 306-7). But structuralism itself operates in this realm. It uses symbolic thinking, and language, while striving to reveal man's links with nature, to which these means are an obstacle.

Simonis concludes that the new humanism is impossible, because it excludes what is truly human, that is, the field of symbolic thinking. "Irons-nous jusqu' à dire que l'humanisme de Lévi-Strauss est un mythe car il en est les fonctions - <sup>R</sup> Surmonter en pensée, en croyant les avoir vraiment surmontées, les oppositions réelles vécues?" (Ibid., p. 310)

The proposed synthesis rests on Simonis' own, which is that structuralism cannot succeed as a science, metonymically, but may as an aesthetic form, by metaphor. It cannot, that is, reveal the structure of the unconscious to the conscious by revealing the whole through its parts. It can only present an homologous image of it. By doing so it remains in the field of symbolic thinking, it is a conscious elaboration, but the truth of its message only appears in the unconscious of the receiver. But the emphasis is placed differently to Simonis' conclusion. It begins with his criticism, that the new humanism is a myth, because it has the functions of a myth.

Lévi-Strauss himself twice states, in the "Ouverture" to "Le Cru et le Cuit" that his work is, in a sense, myth. (Lévi-Strauss, 1964, p. 14, p. 20). It is true that he does not state that it has the function of a myth, and deals with contradictions. But he makes it clear that it is myth because, like myths, it deals with the unconscious mind. And the central contradiction with which structuralism, and myths themselves, deal, centres on the unconscious mind. The contradiction is implicit in

the very nature of myths. They have a conscious form, but, through this, they reveal the unconscious to itself. They bring together, and therefore allow to be admitted together, the two sides of man: his conscious, which is in exchange and symbolic thinking, and is an obstacle to his links with nature; and his unconscious, which informs his conscious, and manifests his links with nature.

It has already been stressed that the essential part of the function of myth is to admit the contradiction with which it deals. Myths, and structuralism, both admit the basic contradiction between the conscious and the unconscious. Simonis' conclusion that the new humanism is impossible, because it eliminates the whole field of symbolic thinking, rests on his attribution of what is truly human to symbolic thinking alone. Lévi-Strauss sees his aim as "humanism" because he attributes what is truly human to the truth of man's links with nature, "l'identification a l'autrui". Both are in fact truly human. The ambiguity of the word in the English language reveals this. For instance, "human nature" is generally evoked as an excuse for that behaviour which arises from man's lack of identification with others. But "humanity" generally refers to man's ability to act and feel for others. The myths under consideration in this work also reveal these two aspects of the "human". This is the contradiction with which structuralism is also concerned. There is both the conscious human, in exchange and symbolic thinking, and the unconscious human, the function of symbolic thinking, which links man with nature. Structuralism admits that both these exist, and, by doing so, signifies the whole truth to the unconscious. Its conscious elaboration is merely an approximation, but, by using the modality of myths, that is, metaphor, it can signify to the unconscious both the distinction of man from others and his identification with them.

The structural analysis of myth must use the same means of signification as the myths because it is attempting to show their meaning. Yet the unique quality of myth is its ability to say what cannot be

said in any other way. Lévi-Strauss deprecates his own work when he points this out, in terms of his constant analogy between myth and music: "Ce qu'on va lire évoque, bien davantage, ces commentaires écrits sur la musique à grand renfort de paraphrases filandreuses et abstractions dévoyées, comme si la musique pouvait être ce dont on parle, elle dont le privilège consiste à savoir dire ce que ne peut être dit d'aucune autre façon." (1964, p. 40). Myth has the advantage over music in that it can be translated. Structuralism may succeed if it can lead to the humanism which is in the myths, by becoming the mythology of societies without myths. The difficulty of this task lies in the impossibility of reproducing the language of myths, without loss of its simplicity and poetry. But it may lead, as Lévi-Strauss hopes, towards the music which is in the myths.

CHAPTER I  
THE LOWLY HUSBAND

This chapter provides an ethnographic context for myths of the Bugun, the Hrusso and the Sherdukpen. There is reliable evidence for political, economic and cultural links between the three populations, which the myths reflect in terms of similarities and marked differences, both in code and in message. The analysis is mainly orientated towards myths of the Bugun and the Hrusso. It is suggested that differences in the two mythical systems may be correlated with differences in the systems of marriage-preferences in the two societies, and reflect different attitudes towards the tendency of society and culture in general to subordinate one class to another. These attitudes may be due to the political systems of the two peoples, and to the superiority which the Hrusso have, in the past, exercised over the Bugun.

The difference in marriage-systems is reflected by the treatment of incest in Bugun and Hrusso myths. Bugun myths exhibit an aversion towards incest whenever they deal with it. Hrusso myths refer to incest complacently and often. This difference appears to be part of a wider divergence between the mythical systems, which may be summed up as a preference for sexual unions between distant partners in Bugun myths, and a preference for unions between close partners in Hrusso myths. In this chapter the trait in the Hrusso myths begins to appear; but the opposite trait in the Bugun myths cannot be made precise until the last chapter. It will then be argued that the mythical systems

may be related to the marriage systems of each population, as producing an inverted image of social structure. The Bugun have a system of restricted exchange, not elaborated into a four or more section system by the separation of adjacent generations. It is suggested that the tendency for groups to be reciprocally interlinked through generations threatens the equilibrium of exchange by bringing groups too close together. The opposite tendency in the Hrusso system might threaten the opposite result. There seems to be generalised exchange among the Hrusso, and there was clearly a hierarchical ordering of groups in the past. Hierarchy between intermarrying groups may tend to make them too distant from one another. In a generalised exchange system the equilibrium of exchange is threatened by the distance between the highest and the lowest groups, brought about by a hierarchical organisation. It is very difficult for the exchange cycle to be completed.

The attitudes towards culture and society in general are reflected in two mythical characters contrasted in this chapter. A character in a Bugun myth is the inverse of a character in a Hrusso myth. They have one feature in common, however: both are representations of culture taken to its furthest extreme. Whereas the Hrusso character is the ideal of the Hrusso social system, the Bugun character is one who would destroy any social system.

The marriage and political systems of the Bugun, the Hrusso and the Sherdukpen will be examined first:



The Bugun

1. The Bugun are divided into patrilineal exogamous groups linked by restricted exchange. This may be inferred from the kinship terms:

KWADUA	=	MBS, ZS
KSHAMI	=	MBD, ZD, FZD
KDAFUA	=	S, MZS, BS, FBS
KDIMI	=	D, BD, FBD
AKHAM	=	MB, HF, WF
KHAM	=	FZ, MBW, HM, WM
MEMUA	=	Z, MZD
MUKAU	=	F's elder B, M's elder Z

(taken from Sinha, 1964)

a) A prohibition on, or a preference against, parallel cousin marriage is shown by the use of the same term, KDAFUA, for MZS and FBS, as well as for S and BS; and by the use of the same term, KDIMI, for FBD as for D and BD.

The use of the term MEMUA for MZD as for Z indicates the same thing. It is slightly anomalous that MZD is not called KDIMI. Calling MZD by the same term as Z could indicate a submerged matrilineage.

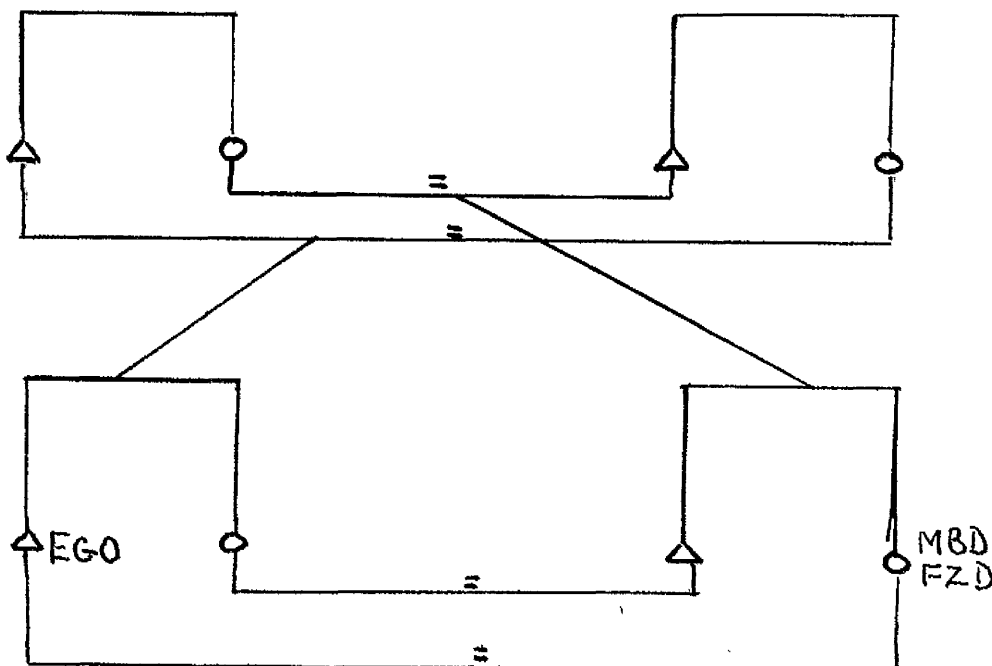
b) There is a preference for marriage with both patrilineal and matrilineal cross-cousins. As well as deducing this from the kinship terms, Sinha (1964) also says: "Our knowledge of Bugun social structure also corroborates the same fact, as we find that in seeking matrimonial alliances the preference always falls for one's

mother's brother's son or daughter, and father's sister's son or daughter, and mother's brother's son and father's sister's daughter and father's sister's son and mother's sister's daughter (he must mean MBD) are regarded virtual mates."

The use of a different term for FZS and MBS is slightly problematic. It might indicate a leaning towards either the patrilateral or the matrilateral alternatives. But this is inconclusive, and the heavy weight of the evidence is towards bilateral marriage.

c) The terms AKHAM and KHAM make for still further evidence. AKHAM is used for MB as well as for WF or HF. KHAM is used for FZ and MBW as well as for WM or HM. The term for FZH is not given.

d) The model indicated by the terms is as below:



According to this model, ego's father's sister should have married his mother's brother, so that ego's own wife is his MBD and FZD.

e) The possibility of the system being developed along the lines of the Kariëra system, into a 4 - section system, seems to be precluded because there is no separation of adjacent generations. (cf. Fox, 1967, pp. 188-192). The term KSHAMI is used for ZD as well as for female cross-cousins, indicating that the mother's brother might marry his sister's daughter. The term KWADUA, being applied to ZS as well as MBS, might indicate that there is some preference for MZ to marry her ZS. Age-differences would probably, though not necessarily, make this unlikely.

2. a) The Bugun used to be, until the present NEFA administration, subordinate to the Hrusso and the Sherdukpen. ". . . ever since their migration from the north to their present habitat, they have had a dependent status; they have had to work for the Hrusso whom they regard as their overlords and they early got heavily in debt to the Sherdukpen, who acted as merchants to supply them with goods from the plains. They have no weaving and few arts and have always been poor." (Elwin, 1958, p. 433). "The Buguns, who for generations had endured a kind of servitude to the Akas (Hrusso), have found a new freedom." (Elwin, 1959 (3), p. 226. He refers to the changes made by the present Administration).

b) Internally the Bugun seem also to have had a class system of some kind. "The Buguns have a two class system." (ibid., p. 252).

### The Hrusso

1. The Hrusso are divided into patrilineal exogamous groups, which Sinha calls "clans", and seem to have a mixed system of generalised and restricted exchange.

a) "Marriages with one's own cross-cousins are quite popular among the Akas(Hrusso) . . . Such marriages are permitted with all types of cross-cousins. A person can marry his mother's brother's daughter; similarly a girl can marry her mother's brother's son. Besides, a boy or girl can also marry his or her mother's sister's daughter or son. Direct parallel-cousin marriages with one's father's brother's son or daughter are strictly avoided." (Sinha, 1962, p. 79).

The only kinship term given, outside the speaker's own clan, is the term "AS". "A person addresses his mother's brother as 'AS'; it is extended . . . to his mother's sisters as well as to all kinswomen of the latter." (*ibid.*) The words "All the kinswomen of the latter" would naturally refer to the female members of the mother's sisters' (and therefore also the mother's) clan of birth. It could also refer to the mother's sister's daughters, who would be the only "kinswomen" of the mother's sister in the clan into which she has married.

There is, therefore, one term applied to the mother's brother and to all the women of his clan. There is no single term applied to all the women of the clan into which the father's sister has married. This indicates a special relationship with the mother's brother

and all the women of his clan (and also, possibly, with MZDs). This might entail a preference for matrilineal cross-cousin marriage. It could not be complete, for, since FZDs and MZDs are also possible mates, there must be elements of other types of exchange.

b) Generalised and restricted exchange may operate at different levels. The first division of Hrusso society is into three major groups: the Kutsun, Kovatsun, and Khrome. Sinha gives no evidence about these, apart from stating that the Khrome speak a different dialect from the rest of the tribe. But old reports (Kennedy, 1915 (Diary), and Hesselmeier, 1868) indicate that the Kutsun and the Kovatsun were, in the past, residentially separated. They were also distinct political entities, each with its own "Raja". (cf. also MacKenzie (1884), included in Elwin (1959)(1), pp. 429-435). The system operating between these groups may have been different from that operating at other levels. The noble families may also have practised a different system from the commoners.

Generalised exchange between clans and restricted exchange between villages is also possible. Villages are theoretically exogamous, though in practice not so today. In the three largest villages there are five clans. These clans are each represented in each village. In the other villages the clans represented in each are restricted to that village. (Sinha, 1962, pp. 52-54).

There may be restricted exchange between some clans and generalised exchange between others. Of the five clans in the three

large villages, three clans do not intermarry with the other two.

"Members of the Sichisow clan are permitted to marry only with members of the Jebisow clan." (Ibid., p. 56). But there could even be generalised exchange between the residential groups of these two clans in each village, on the basis that Jebisow of village A take wives from Sichisow of village B and give wives to Sichisow of village C, and so on.

2. There was, until recently, a hierarchical class-system. This was reflected in marriage-preferences at one time, and marriages had to be between equal clans (although it is suggested that this would not always have been possible in practice).

Nevill (1921) writes: "There are no strictly exogamous or endogamous divisions, but social grades exist, and one sub-clan will not marry into another lower (socially) sub-clan, an equal clan or different tribe will be chosen." This conflicts with Sinha's statement that: "There is no class-system . . . All clans enjoy an equal footing and there is no dogma of higher or lower creed associated with any of them." (1962, p. 55). Nevill's statement about the lack of exogamous divisions may throw doubt on his general accuracy. But his account could, on the other hand, be taken to assume clan exogamy while denying any higher marriage-divisions, such as castes, sections or moieties. For the two alternative marriage-choices which he mentions are: an equal clan, or another tribe. He does not mention the possibility of clan endogamy. He may thus appreciate that the clan is exogamous. Sinha may, on the

other hand, be denying the existence of caste-like divisions and rigid social stratification.

At any rate Elwin's evidence supports Nevill's interpretation. "The Sherdukpen and the Hrusso are dominated by aristocratic families." (1959 (2), p. 20). Elsewhere he states that these still retain a good deal of power in their own hands, though they work through some sort of village councils. (1959 (3), p. 153). And he states that: "the Akas (Hrusso) have three (class) divisions, the aristocracy, the middle-classes, and the slaves." (Ibid., p. 252).

Nevill's and Sinha's accounts are separated by 40 years, during which time there has been more intensive contact with the plains than ever before. In one respect this has greatly altered the social system. The hereditary rulers, or Rajas, of the two sections of the tribe, the Kutsun and the Kovatsun, have disappeared. The only survivals are the two Ranis in the two largest villages. "The Ranis are the descendants of the royal family of the Akas, who were ruling the country till a few decades back." (Sinha, 1962, p. 61). These ladies have wealth and status, political influence and an essentially redistributive economic role. The breakdown of the political power of the Rajas may well have been accompanied by an equalising of relative status between clans.

Sinha's own evidence allows the assumption of some degree of status differential between clans, expressed in terms of marriage-preference. Firstly, there is the refusal of three of the "inter-village" clans to marry into the Jebisow and Sichisow clans. Secondly,

there is a suggestion of a system of hierarchy in his statement:

"Rank and property are the two main determinants of an individual's status." And, discussing bride-price, he says: "The amount of bride-price to be paid depends on the social status of the bride's parents. The higher the position enjoyed by her father in society, the greater will be the number of candidates to claim his daughter's hand." (Ibid., p. 83).

The marriage-customs of the Hrusso, which will be examined in greater detail below, indicate a reluctance on the part of a clan to give woman. For marriage by capture is an accepted and common form; and in negotiated marriage there is a mock-fight between the bride's clan and the groom's clan as a part of the ritual. The ritual itself seems to be aimed at breaking down the differences between clans to create a ritual unity. All these aspects indicate a status differential between clans.

3. It will be seen that Hrusso myths constitute a *prima facie* case for hypergamy. The only evidence for this is slight. Kennedy (Diary, 1914) states that the then Kutsun regent was married to the sister of the Kovatsun Raja. The marriage would have been hypergamous if the Kutsun were superior to the Kovatsun. The slight evidence for this is that only the Kutsun were directly granted the right to receive revenue from the plains by the Assamese kings. (Mackenzie, in Elwin, 1959 (1), p. 429).



The Sherdukpen

1. The Sherdukpen are divided into patrilineal exogamous groups, linked by patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, and possibly also by restricted exchange.

"Both parallel and cross-cousin marriages are known to exist. Marriage with the son of the mother's brother, or conversely, with the daughter of the father's sister, is preferred. Selection of the daughter of the mother's brother or sister as a bride is not popular, and is avoided as far as possible." (Sharma, 1961, p. 54). The following relevant kinship terms are given:

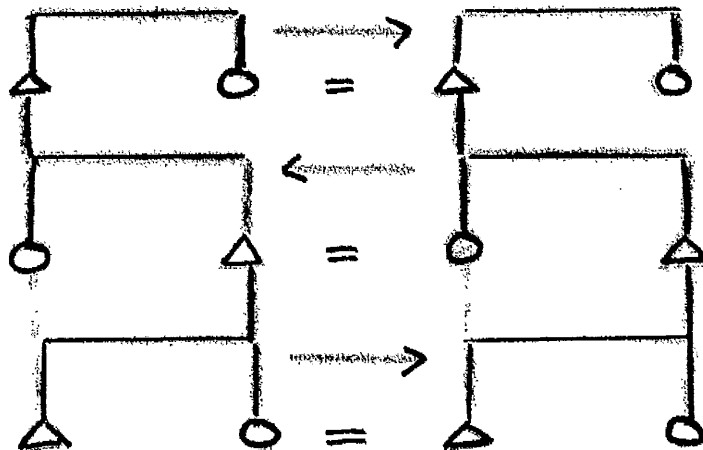
ANNO	=	Elder Z, FBD, MZD
ARA	=	S, MBS, FZS
AZU	=	D, FZD, HZ, BW, WZ
AZANG	=	MB, FZH, HF, WF

The preference against parallel-cousin marriage is indicated by the use of ANNO for MZD as well as own elder sister and FBD.

Restricted exchange is suggested by the use of AZANG for MB and FZH as well as for HF and WF. This is also suggested by the use of the same term, ARA, for MBS and FZS. (Sharma's other evidence indicates that the use of the same term for male cross-cousins as well as own son cannot mean that they are prohibited spouses. The same applies to AZU, used for FZD as well as own daughter.)

The preference for patrilateral marriage is suggested, in the terms, by the use of AZU for FZD, but not for MBD, and also for BW and WZ. For men in the same group and the same generation should

take wives from the same group, but from a different group to the men of the senior and junior generations.



In these circumstances one's brother's wife and one's wife's sister will be the same person, and both will be FZDs.

2. The Sherdukpen have two strictly endogamous hierarchical classes. There is a third class, the Yanlos, but these appear to be latecomers, and Sharma scarcely mentions them. The major classes are the Thongs, who are traditionally superior, and the Chhaos, who are traditionally their servants. "It is regarded as a serious breach of custom for a Thong girl to marry a Chhao or Yanlo boy." (Sharma, p. 51).

Patrilineal marriage would ensure that there would be no danger of a long cycle developing, in which women might pass out of the ruling class. It would also ensure that all marriages are relatively equal, since a gift is always reciprocated in the next generation. This would

prevent hierarchy developing within the class.

The myths appear to reflect similarity between the Bugun and Sherdukpen in respect of marriage, whereas Hrusso myths have more emphasised differences. If the similarity between Bugun and Sherdukpen myths is due, as it seems, to the similarity between restricted exchange and patrilateral marriage, the difference in the Hrusso myths may be due to the major difference between generalised exchange, which involves long cycles, and the other two elementary alternatives. It is suggested that the myths affirm the view of Hrusso society practising generalised exchange.

#### Part One - Reluctant Reciprocity

El : Bugun. The snake-husband. (Elwin, 1956, p. 322).

There was an old woman and her daughter. One day the girl went down to a stream and, removing her clothes, went into the water to bathe. Now the King of the Snakes was living in the stream and when he saw the girl he was very pleased and said to himself, 'If I could get this girl as my wife, it would be wonderful.'

This girl used to go with her mother every day to work in the fields. But one day she stayed at home and presently went down to the stream to fetch water. As she went she sang a little song:

'My mother has gone to work in the field,  
I am left at home to do all the work,  
But there is far too much for me to do.'

She fetched the water and brought it home.

The King of Snakes heard what the girl was singing and said to himself, 'She will be all by herself at home. This is a real chance for me to meet her.' He came out of the water, took the form of a man dressed in the finest Monpa clothes, and started off for the girl's house.

When the girl saw what she thought was a rich Monpa coming towards the house she was excited and said to herself, 'I haven't seen such a fine-looking man for a long time.' The King of the Snakes reached the house and sat down on the front platform. The girl came out and received him with honour, spreading a mat for him to sit on, and brought some beer and roots for him to eat. They sat for a long time talking and the girl felt greatly attracted by her visitor. When the King of the Snakes saw what she was feeling, he decided to test her love and said, 'Now it is time for me to go.' But the girl said, 'Don't go away. Why don't you stay here? If you go away how will I live without you?' The King of the Snakes said, 'You love me and I too love you, but if you were to see me in my proper form you would be afraid.' The girl replied, 'I could never be afraid of you, no matter what you looked like.' When she said that, the King of the Snakes took his proper shape as a great snake and she screamed with fright. He immediately turned back again into a man and said, 'What were you afraid of?' The girl said, 'I saw a great snake.' But he said, 'That was not a snake, that was me.'

The girl laughed at this and said, 'But tell me where you live; why not show me your home?' He replied, 'I live in the water, for I am the King of the Water and I live there in the shape of a snake.' It was now evening and time for the girl's mother to come home from the fields, so the snake said, 'I had better go now, for if your mother were to see me as a snake she would kill me. But whenever your mother is away I will come and see you.' So saying he turned into a snake in front of the girl and went away.

After this the girl always found some excuse for not going to the fields and her mother used to go alone. Directly she had left the house the King of the Snakes would come, drink his rice-beer, eat his roots and spend the day with the girl until it was time for the old woman to return. The result was that the girl not only did no work in the fields, but did not do any work in the house either and her mother got more and more annoyed.

After this had been going on for two or three months the girl found herself pregnant. One day when her time was approaching, she went down to the stream to fetch water and as she was filling her

bamboo-tubes she suddenly laid two eggs, which fell into the water. She snatched at them but was only able to save one, the other egg falling down into the deep water. She took the egg home and wrapped it carefully in a cloth and hid it in a wooden box.

Now the mother was so upset by her daughter's refusal to do any proper work that she told her to get out of the house. When she heard that, the girl said to her mother, 'You stay in the house today and I will go to the field.' As she was leaving the house she turned back and said, 'Whatever you do, don't open that wooden box.'

Naturally the mother immediately opened the box and found the egg wrapped up carefully in a bit of cloth. She took it out and cooked and ate it. In the evening the girl came home carrying a great load of wood. She put it down and went indoors to see whether her egg was all right, but found that it had disappeared. She said to her mother, 'Did you open my box?' The mother replied, 'Yes, I did and found an egg inside.' 'What did you do with it?' asked the daughter. 'I cooked and ate it,' said the mother. The girl cried, 'But that was my child. Why did you eat it? Tomorrow your son-in-law will come here and kill me.' And she burst into tears. The mother felt very sorry and begged her to forgive her.

The following morning when the sun was well up, the King of the Snakes came out of the water, took the form of a man and dressed in his Monpa clothes. As he was approaching the house the girl saw him and ran to her mother crying, 'Look mother, here comes your son-in-law.' The mother was delighted to see such a fine personage and hastily cleaned the house, spread a mat and prepared beer and roots.

Her visitor changed back into a snake as he entered the house and, going to the central pillar of the building, curled round it and climbed up. There was a fire burning on which the old mother was heating rice-beer and she snatched up a log of blazing wood and struck the snake with it and at once he left the house and the girl cried, 'Mother, that was your son-in-law. Why did you beat him?' And she wept bitterly.

The snake was so angry that for many days he stopped the rain from falling and the harvest was withered by the heat and there was nothing to eat in the house.

Now a great many fish were hatched out from the egg that had fallen into the river. The girl went to fetch water and when the fish saw her they all gathered together crying, 'Here is our mother.' When they saw her face thin and sad, they said, 'Mother, what is the matter? Why are you so sad? We are all ready to help you.' The girl replied, 'For many days no rain has fallen; the crops are ruined and we have no food in the house. But if you can send some water to the field, all will be well.' The fish replied, 'Tomorrow we will bring water to your field.' The girl went home and said to her mother, 'Tomorrow go quickly to the field and sow seed there, for your grandchildren are going to bring you water.'

Next morning the mother got up early and took plenty of seed to sow, and presently the fish came flowing like a stream into the field and filled it with water. When it was thoroughly watered the fish returned home, but a few of them could not get out of a little hole which had retained the water. When the mother saw them, she caught them and cooked and ate them.

When the old woman returned home her daughter asked her whether the water had come and the mother said it had. She added that the water had come like a small river and when it had filled the field it went away, where she did not know. The girl then said, 'But where are your grandchildren?' The old lady replied, 'I did not see any grandchildren, but there were some fish in a little pond and I caught them and cooked and ate them.'

When the girl heard that she did not speak a word, but ran to the stream and jumped into deep water and went down to live with the King of the Snakes.

The use of the axis of land and water in this myth is appropriate to signify the relations between intermarrying groups. For land and water are complementary, in respect of agricultural fertility. Like social groups they are distinct, but must be united. El uses the techno-economic code of agriculture as parallel to the sociological code of marriage. Land and water are clearly distinct categories, and this code conveys distinctiveness to social groups. Opposition between the elements in the myth is reinforced by others. Land is entirely female and human, water is male and non-human (though the snake becomes ambiguous when he comes on land). The techno-economic code conveys a distinctiveness to the groups in the sociological code.

Although nothing is known of the classificatory system of the Bugun, it can be inferred by comparison with other systems that a material culture such as the Bugun could see in water an element clearly distinct from land, but nonetheless familiar and thus not too distant from man's primary habitat. Leach (1964) has demonstrated that in the English language there are a number of categories for land-animals which may be placed in a continuum on the basis of their distance from man; thus there are pets, other domestic animals, game, and wild animals. Water-creatures are assigned few significant categories. There is, between man and water animals, a marked discontinuity. The inverse situation is found among the Cantonese-speaking boat-dwellers of Hong Kong, who have an elaborate classificatory scheme for fish and other sea creatures. The difference between the two cultures is that

"to the boat people, water is the safe home, land the strange and hostile environment." (Anderson, p. 446). The Thai villagers studied by Tambiah (1969) seem to come mid-way between these two positions. They classify three types of creatures as "sad", which means "sentient creatures". These are domestic animals, animals of the forest and water animals. The Bugun attitude to water animals and water in general is likely to correspond most closely to the Thai attitude. For they cultivate rice, like the Thais, and would transplant it standing in flooded fields (Mills, 1947). It will be seen that the myth is dealing with this real situation. The relationship between complementary yet distinct elements in B1 seems to emphasise an ideal relationship between intermarrying groups, a situation the Bugun would regard as a regular marriage.

S1 : Sherdukpen. The Snake-husband. (Elwin, 1958, p. 334).

There was once an old woman who had two daughters. The elder daughter was very beautiful but nobody thought anything of her because she could not weave properly. The other girl made cloth with beautiful patterns but this girl could only weave plain cloth, and the other girls used to laugh at her.

Once, when she was feeling very miserable about this, she did not eat all day and in the evening went down to bathe in the river. As she was bathing a great snake came out of the water and she started to run away. But when the snake saw how beautiful she was he turned into a handsome youth and said, 'Why are you frightened?' The girl replied, 'Because I thought you were a snake.' 'No! I'm not really a snake,' said the youth. 'I live beneath the water and I can take the form of a snake or a man as I please.' Then the girl, seeing the boy's beauty, came near him



and they fell in love with one another. After that, every evening when the girl had eaten her supper she used to go down secretly to the river and spend the night with her lover on the bank. Every morning the youth would turn into a snake and go down to his house beneath the water.

One evening when they met as usual, the girl refused to speak, for she was very sad because she could not weave properly. After a lot of persuasion she told her lover about it and he said, 'Don't worry about this. In the morning I will come in my beautiful skin; you can take me to your house and when you sit at your loom you can hold me in your lap and copy the patterns on my body.'

The boy turned again into a snake and went into the water and the girl sat all night on the river-bank. At dawn he came back as a snake in his beautiful skin. The girl took him home and sat down to her loom with him on her lap. The other girls came to watch but when they saw the snake they ran away in fright. But soon she was making the finest cloth in the whole village.

That evening the girl carried the snake down to the river-bank and he turned into a man again. In a few days the girl had made three beautiful pieces of cloth. She gave one to her sister, one to the other girls so that they could imitate it, and kept one for herself.

After a little while, the snake said, 'This is no way to live. The right thing will be for me to marry you and take you to my house.' 'But how can I live under the water?' asked the girl. 'Don't worry about that,' he replied, 'I will come to you with a great party and many instruments of music and you will be able to live in the river quite happily.' So next morning the girl said to her mother, 'I am going to my husband.' 'What husband is this?' asked the mother. 'It is my snake-husband who taught me to weave.' 'But how can you do such a thing? He will kill you.' The mother alternatively abused and cajoled her, but she refused to listen.

After two days the boy came with a great procession and playing many instruments of music. To the eyes of the villagers the visitors looked

like snakes, but to the girl they looked like human beings. As her husband was taking her away, she said to her mother, 'I'm going now, but if ever you are in trouble come to the bank of the river and call me.' So the girl went into the river and deep down below the water there was a palace of gold and the two lived there happily and had many children.

Then one day her younger sister said, 'Why shouldn't I too marry a snake?' She went down to the river and found a hole where a black snake lived. She lay down beside it hoping that this snake also would turn into a handsome youth and marry her. But when he came out of his hole, he was just a snake and killed her.

Now the girl's mother had no one to look after her and she was very old; she could only hobble about and there was no food in the house. So one day she went weeping to the river-bank and cried, 'My daughter, my daughter!' Night fell and the girl came out of the water and said, 'Come with me.' Her mother refused, but her daughter tied a cloth round her face and dragged her down. There the old woman saw the palace of gold and a crowd of children crying, 'Granny.' They surrounded her, played with her dress and climbed into her lap. Suddenly they turned into snakes and coiled themselves round her. She threw them off in fright and they became human again.

After this the old woman said to her daughter, 'Send me home, this is too much for me.' Her son-in-law said, 'Very well, but I will give you something to take back with you.' He tied some sand in one piece of cloth and a little grain in another piece. He found a scrap of rope and a bit of wood each as long as his little finger. He tied these things up in a bundle and gave them to the old woman saying, 'Don't look at them on the way; take them home and put each of them in a separate basket as big as you can find. Then after a week open the baskets and see what you have.' Then he took her out of the water.

When she was left alone on the bank the old woman thought, 'I have been on a visit to the house of my daughter and son-in-law and they have given me no money but only these wretched

things.' She felt so upset that she threw the bundle on the ground. But later she thought, 'Perhaps I had better do what my son-in-law said,' and she picked up all the things she could find and put them in little baskets. After a week she opened the baskets and found the bit of wood had turned into dried fish, the rope had turned into dried meat, the sand had become rice and the grain had become rice-seed. But since she had thrown away most of what her son-in-law had given her and had only put what was left in small baskets, there was not very much. But even then there was now something for her to eat and she lived on what she had until she died.

The complementarity and distinctiveness of land and water has the same role in S1. But S1 transforms B1 in two ways, which may be related, respectively, to a difference between marriage-systems and between techno-economic systems. In S1 there are two "husbands" but only one set of children; in B1 there are two sets of children, but only one "husband". In their patrilateral marriage-system, the Sherdukpen clan would exchange wives with two other clans, whereas the Bugun clan would exchange with only one.

The duality of the husbands in S1 and of the children in B1 reinforces the major opposition of the myths. For both pairs are divided between land and water. But there is another opposition between the terms of each pair in each myth. In B1 the land children are inactive, the water children are active and helpful. In S1 the land husband is positively helpful, the water husband is positively harmful:

Bl Children		Sl Husbands	
Land	Water	Land	Water
Inactive	Helpful	Harmful	Helpful

This opposition is strengthened in Sl, which may reflect a difference in the Sherdukpen agricultural system and the fertility of their land. The Bugun, for whom water is plentiful enough to grow rice, make neither land nor water harmful in their myth. In the Sherdukpen myth land is harmful, as land without water is harmful to agriculturalists. This may be related to the ecological state of the Sherdukpen terrain, which is parched and rocky with a top layer of sand, and a low capacity for retaining moisture. The monsoon "at times supplies too little water and thus hinders the healthy growth of crops." (Sharma, 1961, p. 3) They grow no rice (*ibid.*, p. 33).

The marriage and residence patterns in Bl and Sl may reflect actual practice. Short term uxori-local residence occurs among the Sherdukpen, and may constitute a form of marriage by service. "This method is resorted to, when the father of the girl has no son or other male relation to help him in the fields." (Sharma, 1961). It is very likely to occur, in some marriages at least, among the Bugun. In the situations given by the myths uxori-local marriage might be expected to be highly desirable, as the mothers and daughters have no male relatives.

The myths set up marriages which are more than normal, they are ideal. The two elements, land and water, are complementary but distinct, whereas groups may tend to lose their distinctiveness in reality

through the repeated exchanges of bilateral and patrilateral marriage. Creatures from the water are emphasised as helpful; the husband of S1 helps with weaving and gives food, the children of B1 who come with water bring agricultural fertility.

The ideal equilibrium of marriage-exchange is disrupted by the two mothers-in-law, who insist on the superiority of their cultural status and the distinctiveness of their humanity. The two husbands, who are partly non-human, are either driven away (B1) or treated with fear (S1). The mother-in-law of B1 would clearly be satisfied with her son-in-law if he were human, for as such she welcomes him into the house. But when he becomes a snake, she drives him out with fire, stressing her cultural superiority. (It will be shown in the next chapter that the structure of these myths is based on a conflict between natural and cultural relations in marriage). Towards the children, the grandmothers also display attitudes asserting their own distinctiveness as humans. In B1 the grandmother actually eats the children. In this act she displays her basic characteristic: she emphasises culture to such a point as to deny reciprocity, the foundation of culture. The children bring her the means to get food. Far from reciprocating their gifts, and even from gratitude, she kills and eats them. And by cooking them, she asserts her cultural status at the same time.

The emphasis on culture, but against reciprocity, is doomed to failure. Even against her will the mother-in-law of B1 is forced to give, for she loses her daughter, and to take, for she is dependent on

her daughter's husband for food. The only result is to isolate herself:

Emphasis on culture

Isolation

Denial of reciprocity

Forced to be reciprocal

## Part Two - The Benevolent Giver

H1 : Hrusso. The water-girl. (Elwin, 1958, p. 169).

Siksilia-ao, the Lord of the Rivers, had a daughter called Siksilia-Sam, who used to play with the fishes and frogs in the water. Though she was human in form she lived like a fish and had never seen any other human being. One day as she was playing with the fishes and frogs in the water, she came out onto the bank and went running, naked as she was, along the river-side.

At that moment a good-looking youth called Turu-Lebou came down to the river to fish. The girl saw him, and said to herself, 'I have never seen anything like this before.' She ran up close to get a better look and asked the boy, 'Who are you? Where do you live? What is your name?' Turu-Lebou told her his name and showed her where his house was. Then he in turn asked her whose daughter she was, where she lived and whether she was married or not. She replied, 'I am the daughter of the Lord of the Rivers, whose name is Siksilia-ao. I myself live in the water and I am not married, for you are the first human being I have ever seen.' Turu-Lebou exclaimed, 'Good. I'm not married either.' And he caught her by the hand and ran away with her to his house, where he married her without delay.

When Siksilia-ao heard of the marriage he sent a frog to Turu-Lebou with a message that if he did not send the girl back at once he would come and destroy him.

When Turu-Lebou heard the frog's message he replied, 'I am a human being and am not afraid of any Lord of the Rivers. I too know how to fight.'

When the frog repeated this to Siksilia-ao, he was very angry and went himself to see Turu-Lebou.

When Turu-Lebou saw the Lord Siksilia-ao approaching, he hastily put his wife into a hollow bamboo, closed the lid and hid it in the loft. Siksilia-ao sat down on the threshold of the house and cried, 'Return my daughter or I will kill you.' Turu-Lebou replied, 'Your daughter isn't here. If you don't believe me, come in and look.' Siksilia-ao went in and searched everywhere, but could not find the girl. He then said, 'You say that you are a man and I am only the Lord of the Rivers. Now prove what strength you have.'

Siksilia-ao cut some great bamboos, thick and strong, and said to Turu-Lebou, 'Carry these down to the valley below.' The boy picked them up and carried them easily from the top of the hill to the bottom. Siksilia-ao followed him to see that he did not cheat and when they got to the bottom Turu-Lebou said, 'Look, I have brought them down,' and Siksilia-ao said, 'Yes, you have.'

Then Turu-Lebou in his turn cut down a great tree and said to Siksilia-ao, 'If you are really the Lord of the Water, carry this tree to the top of the hill.' Siksilia-ao picked up the tree, but after he had carried it a little distance he put it down and said, 'It's too heavy: I can't carry it a step further,' Turu-Lebou said, 'Then I've defeated you.' But Siksilia-ao said, 'Not yet you haven't.' He made a big pile of dry grass and set fire to it and the boy easily went through the fire, but all the hair on his body was burnt off. Formerly this hair used to keep him warm, but now he felt cold and naked and made himself clothes of bark. This why now-a-days men do not have a great deal of hair on their bodies.

Then Turu-Lebou said, 'Now you must admit that I am greater than you.' But Siksilia-ao replied, 'What is there in going through a little fire? I can do that myself.' This annoyed Turu-Lebou and he made a great pile of wood and set fire to it and told Siksilia-ao to pass through the flames. Siksilia-ao tried, but the heat and smoke was too much for him and he turned back. But even now he would not give up and said, 'Well, let's try once more. We will each take a stone and whoever can throw it further will be the greater.'

Turu-Lebou said to Siksilia-ao, 'I must go and relieve myself.' But all he did was to go a little distance away and catch a tiny bird which he hid in his hand. He came back to Siksilia-ao and said, 'You throw first and then I will.' Siksilia-ao threw his stone, but as it was only a stone it did not go very far. Then, pretending that he had a very heavy stone in his hand, Turu-Lebou threw the little bird as hard as he could and it flew away, away to a great distance.

Now at last Siksilia-ao admitted that he had been defeated and agreed that Turu-Lebou could marry his daughter and went so far as to say that he had a fine son-in-law. Then Turu-Lebou and Siksilia-ao returned home and Turu-Lebou brought his wife out of her hiding-place and they all began to live together.

But though they were apparently quite happy, Siksilia-ao was actually far from being pleased with the arrangement. He could not forget that he was a great Lord and that an ordinary peasant had defeated him and taken away his daughter.

One day Siksilia-ao and Turu-Lebou went together to fish, but when the fishes and frogs saw the Lord of the Rivers, they ran away in fright. Turu-Lebou tried very hard to catch some of them, but it was no good, and then Siksilia-ao said, 'Look, son-in-law, what the fish are afraid of is your beard. Take it off and you'll soon be able to get something.' Turu-Lebou accordingly took off his beard, put it on a stone and went into the river. When he was in the deep water Siksilia-ao picked up Turu-Lebou's beard and ate it, then followed him into the river. But directly Siksilia-ao ate the beard Turu-Lebou was attacked with fever and returned to the bank. He looked everywhere for his beard and for his father-in-law too, but could not find them anywhere. He felt very ill and went home as quickly as he could and said to his wife, 'I have got fever and must lie down.' When she saw him she was surprised and said, 'But where is your beard?' Turu-Lebou told her and she replied, 'I will tell you what really happened. My father has eaten your beard and gone down into the river. That is why you've got this fever.' Turu-Lebou said to her, 'Go and see your father and ask him what we should do about it.'



The girl went to her father and asked him what should be done and Siksilia-ao replied, 'Sacrifice a domestic pig and fowl and he will recover. But they must not be wild creatures.'

She returned home and told her husband what Siksilia-ao had said. Turu-Lebou went to get a pig and a fowl from Sibji-Sao and Sibjim-Sam who had plenty in their house. He brought them back with him and when they had sacrificed them, he recovered.

In due time Siksilia-Sam gave birth to a son whom they called Buslu-Ao; he was the father of Awa and Ossin from whom descended the Hrussos and Bangnis.

Hl may be attached to the same group as Bl and Sl, which it joins at three points:

1. A marriage between parties separated on a Land / Water axis.
2. A conflict, when the married couple are in conjunction with one of the wife's parents, leading to a disjunction between them.
3. The receipt, by the parent of the wife, of gifts from allies.

An alteration in the code based on the opposition between Land and Water reveals the essential difference between Hl on the one hand and Bl and Sl on the other. In the first place Hl deals with fishing, whereas Bl deals with agriculture and Sl with weaving. These three activities have very different relative values. Agriculture is clearly vital to the Bugun economy. Weaving is an advanced art among the Sherdukpen, and a major activity (Elwin, 1959 (2) ). But fishing plays an unimportant part in Hrusso life (Sinha, 1961, p. 46). The other

code in Hl concerns disease, and the Hrusso connect earthly water with disease. Hesselmeier (1868) states that they offer sacrifices in the case of disease to Fuxu, god of jungle and water. Another Hrusso myth (Elwin, 1958, p. 261) attributes the coming of disease to two water-gods, the sons of Siksilia-ao, the malevolent father-in-law of Hl. It seems that the meaning of the Land/Water axis in Hl may be that the groups, like the elements, are not compatible.

It is necessary to examine the Hrusso marriage-system more closely, and to suggest the nature of the difficulty underlying it. The marriage-ritual of the Hrusso emphasises the unity of intermarrying groups, which would affect their system in three ways. If the system contains elements of generalised exchange and of hierarchy, there is always a tendency for social distance between groups which intermarry to be great. The assumption of unity in the ritual context could overcome the real distance between groups in each specific marriage, and compensate ritually for the tendency to separate groups inherent in the system. Secondly, a superior group intermarrying with an inferior might see a threat to its own status, particularly as the ideal that marriages should be between equal groups might seem to lower<sup>the</sup>/superior to the status of the inferior. The assumption of unity would allow the superior group to see the inferior, in the ritual context, not as a separate group, but as a part of its own group, merely an extension of itself. Its view of its own status would then be unaffected. Thirdly, an inferior group might expect to benefit from a marriage with a superior, and to be able

to advance its own status. The assumption that it is one with the superior group enhances this benefit. It has not only been linked with a superior group, but has partaken of its superiority.

The real marriage-customs of the Hrusso are echoed in Hl. Marriage by capture exists in reality as in the myth. But in the myth this involves real antagonism, in reality it is often an empty form, and its institutionalisation acts to control antagonism. Once the capture is accomplished it is binding on the girl's parents, who may only demand bride-price (Sinha, 1962, p. 76). But in the myth the father-in-law vehemently demands the return of his daughter. The myth also resembles the rites at a negotiated marriage in Hrusso social life. The relation of Hl to reality is to treat as real what are, in reality, only metaphors.

In the real marriage-ritual (Sinha, 1962, pp. 72-75) there is a mock-fight between the bride's clan and the groom's clan before the latter are allowed to enter the village of the bride. This is a metaphor for real antagonism, for a mock-fight is, by definition, a fight which no one wins. In the marriage-ceremony the bride's people sing a marriage-hymn: "Before this eventful day, we had not know each other. We had never met nor talked to each other. The gods above have united us, and we start living as one from this day. Your son we regard as our own and entrust our daughter to your charge." (Sinha, 1962, p. 74). Another custom during the ceremony also suggests the breaking down of distinctions and the ritual assumption of unity. "The elder women of the bride's village dress themselves as men and join the groom's party to gossip

and joke with them." The denial of the most basic distinction, that of sex, may indicate that all distinctions, the main one being that between the allied groups themselves, are being overcome.

H1 replaces the metaphors in the ritual, firstly by a real contest, secondly by a husband and a father-in-law who have really never met before, and thirdly by the fact that the "groups" do come to live together as one. At this point the situation changes; the father-in-law does not accept the result of the contest; he leaves his daughter and son-in-law; and he injures his son-in-law, demonstrating that antagonism still exists.

The unity of the father-in-law and son-in-law in H1 brings about an ideal situation at which ritual also aims. Elements which are at first distant and may be antagonistic (given the connotations of earthly Water in Hrusso ideas) become completely unitary. The immediate reversal of direction in H1 indicates the failure of the assumption of unity in reality. It does not really compensate for the tendency towards social distance in the system. It is merely a palliative for the superior group, whose status is lowered by marriage with an inferior, and, although the particular inferior group may benefit, relations of inferiority and superiority are still produced and emphasised by the overall system.

In reality a superior group would tend to re-assert its superiority after the marriage, and might resent the inferior group which had demeaned its status. The aim of a superior group is not to retain the

balance of the system, although it is often forced to do so, but to establish a fixed superiority, which puts its status beyond danger.

This is present in the myth. The contest is seen by the superior party, the father-in-law, Lord of the Rivers, as an affront to his dignity which needs to be avenged. He reverses his son-in-law's spurious victory, as a superior group in reality would re-assert its status after marriage. Above all he sets himself up in a position of fixed superiority, able to benefit from his son-in-law's gifts. There is a probable reflection of reality in this. For it has been noted that Nevill mentions the solution to the problem of marriage with an equal clan as marriage outside the tribe. Sinha (1962, p. 78) indicates that intermarriage with one tribe, the Dhammai, is fairly frequent. The ideal of an aristocratic group among the Hrusso may well be to escape from the exchange-cycle within the tribe, while still benefiting economically from its superiority, through the gifts of lower groups. (The redistributive role of the Ranis, even today, emphasises that they receive gifts from lower groups merely on account of their rank.)

The father-in-law of H1 establishes his superiority by giving disease. He is then able to demand gifts, in the form of sacrifice, from the human group at any time. The reciprocity provided by his cure is illusory, for he cures the disease which he himself caused. This one-sided relationship between the bringers and curers of disease and the sufferers is also seen in myths of the Saora of Orissa. Hungry gods

or spirits cause disease to men in order to be fed. (Elwin, 1955, p. 202).

Another Hrusso myth links the pathological code of H1 and the agricultural code of B1.

H2 : Hrusso. The Sun's daughter. (Elwin, 1958, p. 107)

Long ago there was a man called Awa. His body was like a bear's, covered with thick hair, yet in spite of this he managed to marry Jusam, the beautiful daughter of the Sun. At the wedding the Sun gave her a hen's feather and some pig's bristles. Awa took his bride home and in due time she gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. They called the boy Sibji-Sao and the girl Sibjim-Sam.

When the children grew up a little, they both fell ill. The father sent for the Mugga-priest who said that if Awa sacrificed a fowl and a pig the children would recover, but he insisted that the fowl and the pig must be domestic animals and not caught in the jungle.

Unfortunately Awa had no pigs or fowls in the house and did not know where to get any. When his wife saw him looking so distracted she asked him what was the matter and he told her what the priest had said. Jusam replied, 'Don't worry. Make a bamboo cage and a trough.'

Awa accordingly made a bamboo cage and put a wooden trough beside it. When everything was ready, Jusam sat down in front of the cage and, taking one of the feathers she had from her father's house, blew on it and a cock and hen immediately appeared inside the cage. Then she sat in front of the trough and, taking some of the bristles that she had from her father's house, blew on them, and a pig and a sow immediately appeared before the trough.

But at once the pigs and the fowls began to weep. Jusam tried to console them by offering them milk from her own breast, but they would not take it and she said, 'Since you won't drink my milk, what are you crying about?' The pigs and fowls replied, 'Be cause we are very hungry.' Jusam said, 'I've got nothing else to give you, which is why I offered you my own milk.' The fowls and pigs said, 'No, whatever we do, we are not going to drink your milk,

for then you will never want to kill us -- and we have been made to be killed.' Jusam said, 'Well, that is all I've got to give you; if you don't want to have it, eat anything you can find.'

At that moment the children relieved themselves and the pigs and fowls ran to eat the mess.

Soon afterwards the hen laid her eggs and hatched out chickens, and the pig had a litter. Awa took a chicken and a pig and sacrificed them for his children, who soon were well again.

In this way Awa and his wife got pigs and fowls in their house, but they had no seed. So Jusam said to her husband, 'Go to my father's house, for he has a great store of grain, and if you ask him nicely he will give you some of it.' Awa replied, 'But I don't know the way to your father's house.' Jusam, therefore, went with him part of the way as his guide. Then she said, 'Now you can follow the path, but presently you will come to a point where it divides in two. Be sure you take the right-hand path and not the left. If you go the left, you will find yourself in all sorts of trouble.' Jusam then returned home and Awa went on his way.

Presently Awa came to the point where the path divided in two and, remembering what his wife had said, went to the right, but there were so many thorns and pitfalls that he thought that she must have made a mistake, and turned back and went to the left.

He walked a long way until at last he came to a cave where a demon, Mithi-Chitjin, was sitting beside a great fire. When the demon saw him, he threw a burning bit of wood which burnt him and turned him into a dog.

Poor Awa slunk back to his house but did not dare go in; he just lay down in front of the door, placing his front paws together on the threshold. Presently the two children Sibji-Sao and Sibjim-Sam came out; they saw the dog lying there, and ran back to their mother and said, 'There is an extraordinary creature sitting at the door.' Their mother came hurriedly and when she saw the dog, she realized at once that it was her foolish husband who had taken the wrong path, and told her children, 'This is your father.' But they replied, 'How can this be our father, who is a great big man?' Jusam said, 'If you don't believe me, spit on your hands and offer them to this creature. If he licks them, it will mean he is your father; if he

doesn't, then he is something else.' So the children spat on their hands and held them out to the dog who immediately licked them and Jusam said, 'There, don't you see? He really is your father.' The children said, 'Yes, you are right, he is our father.'

Jusam explained things to them saying, 'What happened was that your father was going to my father's house to get seed but he took the wrong path and has been turned into a dog. Now how I am to feed you both I really do not know. The only thing for me to do is to go myself to my father. I'll send you some seed and you'll be able to make fields and cultivate them and in that way get some food to eat.' But the children began to cry and would not let their mother go and she had to wait till evening. She put the children to sleep and then secretly went to her father.

When Jusam left the house, the evil spirits of the forest, seeing that the two children were alone, gathered round to devour them. But when the dog saw them coming he barked loudly and drove them away. In the morning when the children found their mother gone, they cried and said to each other, 'Come along, let's follow mother wherever she has gone.' The dog went ahead to guide them and the children followed him. He went as far as he knew the way, and then stood still. The children sat down to rest and the dog thought to himself, 'Let them sleep for a bit, while I go and try to find the right path.'

When the evil spirits of the forest saw the children alone, they gathered round to devour them and the children woke up and ran for their lives.

As they were running along they met a bear who asked them, 'What's the matter? Why are you running so fast?' They replied that the evil spirits of the forest were chasing them. The bear said, 'Don't be so frightened. I will save you.' He took them on his back and climbed up a high tree and, making them sit on a branch at the top, came down and scraped off the bark so that the spirits could not climb up. Having done this, he went away.

After the bear had gone, the evil spirits of the forest came to the tree. They tried to climb up, but the trunk was too smooth for them. So they began to cut down the tree with their teeth. When they saw what was happening, the children said to the tree,



'When you fall, fall towards the open country.'  
But the spirits of the forest cried, 'Fall towards the mountains.' At last when the tree did fall, it came down in the direction of the open country. It did this out of mercy for the children, for the evil spirits could not go towards the open country.

The children were safe for the moment and said to each other, 'Somehow or other we must find our mother.' As they were wondering what to do, a vulture flew down and asked them what the matter was. When they told him, he said, 'It is my duty to search every day for dead bodies and take their blood to the house of the Sun.' The children said, 'But that's just where we want to go; our mother is the daughter of the Sun, so when you go take us with you.' The vulture replied, 'You are too heavy for me to take both of you at the same time. I can take only one of you.' So he took Sibjim-Sam on his back and flew to the house of the Sun. When Jusam saw her daughter, she was very pleased and gave her a big basket of seed. She tied a rope to her hair and let her down to the earth, right in front of the house. When the girl reached home, she cooked some of the seed and made it into beer, and then sat outside watching the road until her brother should return.

Sibji-Sao remained standing where he was, for he did not know where to go, for a long time. But as he was wondering what he could do, the dog who had been searching everywhere for the two children found him. When he saw his son he jumped on him, licking his face, barking, and wagging his tail and then led him back home. When they reached the house Sibjim-Sam made supper for them and gave them lots of beer, for they were all very happy at meeting again.

After some time the two children came together as man and wife, and they were the parents of mankind.

The episode of the curing of disease in H2 inverts that of the causing of fever in H1. In H1 the father-in-law causes disease by eating the beard of his son-in-law. In H2 the Sun's daughter creates the animals who can cure disease by blowing on the bristles and feathers given to her by her father. There is an opposition between introjection and projection:

H1	Disease caused by introjection of beard (human hair)	H2	Disease cured by projection on to the bristles and feathers (animal 'hair')
----	--	----	--

The same opposition occurs within H2. The pigs and fowls refuse breast-milk, but eat excrement:

H2 Pigs and fowls:

Will not introject what is projected (Milk) and should be introjected	Introject (Faeces) what is projected and should not be introjected.
--	--

This opposition is central to the interrelation between the pathological and alimentary codes. In many societies disease is thought of as a physical object inside the sufferer. Among the Saora it is sometimes a small object (Elwin, *ibid.*, p. 237), and sometimes the spirit itself (p. 220). The alimentary code is thus the inverse of the pathological. One suffers if food is not introjected, one suffers if disease is not projected. The pigs and fowls of H2 introject what should only be projected because their sacrificial role is to project what has been introjected.

The pigs and fowls, by refusing breast-milk and taking excrement, both identify themselves with and differentiate themselves from the children. Domestic animals are brought up very similarly to children. It will be shown in the next chapter that the myths use the relations of Man : pigs and fowls : wild animals as parallel to those of Clan : children : Allies.

But all animals for sacrifice must be both identified and differentiated from the sacrificier (the subject to whom the benefits of the sacrifice accrue, or who undergoes its effect). Sacrifice brings about a continuity between man and god. "The victim is the intermediary through which the communication is established." (Hubert and Mauss, p. 44). The victim is identified with the sacrificier; their personalities are fused (*ibid.*, p. 32). Among the Nuer this is achieved by rubbing ashes, which must be of cattle-dung, on the victim's back. (Evans-Pritchard, 1956, pp. 261-2). In H2 the victims eat human dung.

The victim must also be distinguished from the sacrificier, for one is to die that the other may live. In the Vedic sacrifice the victim is separated by being enclosed in a final magic circle, more divine than those surrounding the rest of the participants. And the sacrifice itself always separates victim from sacrificier, for the killing of the animal breaks the continuity between man and god, in order that the god may fill the gap by providing the desired benefit. (Lévi-Strauss, <sup>(2)</sup> 1966<sub>k</sub> p. 225).

The fixed position of superiority achieved by the father-in-law of H1 was not complete. He is forced to accept his position in the realm of exchange, for he has had to renounce his daughter. Even as the bringer of disease, he is dependent on his inferiors for their gifts. And, to the inferior groups in Hrusso society, one who set himself<sup>up</sup> as a perpetual taker would threaten to destroy the system, although this might appear an ideal position to the superior groups. The father-in-law of H2 achieves the perfect ideal. He manages to ~~ex~~cape from exchange, because his daughter returns to him. He achieves it by being a perpetual giver - he gives domestic animals, he gives seed, and he gives his daughter. He is an ideal of the system from both points of view. He achieves the ends of exchange: relations between groups, and children for the lower groups. But he remains, himself, outside exchange.

The Sun grandfather of H2 is the inverse of the grandmother of B1, while the father-in-law of H1 is an intermediary transformation. The Sun grandfather is like the grandmother of B1 in that both emphasise culture; in this they differ from the father-in-law of H1 who resents his daughter marrying a human. In all other respects H2 inverts B1, while H1 is closer to B1 or intermediary:

B1	Culture <sup>+</sup>	Isolation	Forced Reciprocity	Malevolent	Destruction of System	
H1	Culture <sup>-</sup>	Isolation	Forced Escape from	Reciprocity	Malevolent	Destruction of Ideal
H2	Culture <sup>+</sup>	Non-Isolation	Escape from Reciprocity	Benevolent	Ideal of system	

Although the Sun in H2 may be the ideal of the system, he accentuates, rather than solves, the essential problem of the system, the distance between intermarrying groups. To this H2 provides the solution of incest. As the closest form of unity between the sexes, incest represents an exaggerated closeness between marriage partners, which solves, for the myth, the real difficulty of distance between intermarrying groups.

The point in a generalised exchange system where distance is most strongly emphasised is between the highest and the lowest groups. If the cycle is to be completed, these must intermarry. Many myths and institutions from many societies deal with this problem, which presents a constant threat to the stability of any generalised exchange system through the likelihood that the cycle will never be completed. The similarity of H1 and H2 to myths and customs relating to problems of hypergamy suggests that marriage may be hypergamous among the Hrusso, and that the problem of distance between intermarrying groups is seen in these terms.

In a hypergamous system, women in the highest group should marry men in the lowest group, if the lower classes are to be convinced that

the cycle will be completed. There are solutions to this in many Indo-European cultures, as to the similar problem of hypogamy. The "swayamvara" marriage of the Mahabharata, to which Lévi-Strauss refers (1969, p. 475) allows a person of high social rank to give his daughter to a husband of her own choice, to one who performs an extraordinary feat, or wins in a competition with other suitors. In H2 the father-in-law is quite willing to give his daughter to the man, covered in hair. But the man subsequently fails to perform the feat of bringing back seed, and loses his bride. In H1 the girl chooses her own husband. He has to prove his right to her, not in a contest with the monster who threatens the kingdom, as in the Grimms' tale of the Little Tailor, but in a contest with her father himself. And the ludicrous events of that contest closely resemble those in the Little Tailor's preliminary contest with the giant. It is unfortunate that the ethnographic data is too sparse to test this interpretation.

### Part Three - The Two Tigers

The demonstration of the inverse characteristics of the grandmother of B1 and the grandfather of H2 can be confirmed by three myths about the tiger. The myths demonstrate the contradictory nature of man's relations with the tiger, and echo the South American myths of the jaguar, master of cooking-fire (Lévi-Strauss, 1964). The tiger, like the jaguar, is the complement of man, for both hunt the same game; it is

also the opposite, for the tiger is natural, man is cultural. There is also a relationship of non-reciprocity with the tiger. Tigers eat men, but men (at least in this part of NEFA) do not eat tigers.

B2 : Bugun. The tiger-child (1). (Elwin, 1958, pp. 414-416).

Long ago there was an old man called Phumphulu who had a wife called Muinini. Phumphulu was too weak and frail to do any work and his wife did everything, cultivating in the forest and fetching wood and roots to eat.

Although they were old, one day Muinini found herself pregnant. When her time came, she gave birth to a child which was not human, but crawled on four legs. When Phumphulu saw it, he said to his wife, 'We are old and our child is some sort of animal. Had it been a real human child we could have fed him on what we eat ourselves, but how can we feed this creature?' The child heard what his parents said and although he was only a baby he spoke to them. 'Mother and father,' he said, 'don't worry. I will go every day to the forest and bring you back sufficient meat so that you'll have more food and not less than you had before.' Hearing this, the parents were very pleased.

The child grew up quickly and was soon going to the forest to hunt. Sometimes he would kill a pig, eat half of it himself and bring half for his parents; another day he would kill a deer, eat half of it himself and bring the other half for his parents. In this way he killed many kinds of animal and always brought half of the meat for Phumphulu and Muinini.

After some time Muinini conceived again and this time gave birth to a dog. The parents were very worried at having yet another animal in the family and wondered what they were to do for him. But the puppy said, 'Mother and father, don't worry. I will be the guardian of your house and I will always show you what path to take. Wherever you go, I will go too and look after you.' When they heard this the parents were consoled.

One day the tiger-child said to his parents, 'I am going on a long journey to hunt; you both follow me as far as Lora-Phong and I will meet you there with plenty of meat.' Having said this the tiger-child went away.

Phumphulu and Muinini prepared food and rice-beer for their son and started off for Lora-Phong and the puppy followed them. When they reached the place they found a great rock, beneath which they made their camp. They made a fire and began to cook some rice, anxiously watching the path for the moment when their tiger-son would bring them the meat. Two days passed but the tiger did not come. The puppy said to the old couple, 'My elder brother hasn't come, so I'll go and look for him.' He went a very long way and presently found his brother lying asleep by the path. He woke him up and said, 'What are you doing? We were all expecting to see you at least two days ago and our parents are very hungry and yet here you are lying asleep by the side of the path.'

'Ever since I left the house,' said the tiger, 'I've not been able to catch a single animal. Nor have I had a bite to eat, and that has made me weak which is why I've been sleeping here.' As he looked at his younger brother the tiger felt even more hungry and he said, 'Why did you wake me up? I am going to eat you.' At that the puppy ran away all the way back to his parents at Lora-Phong. But he did not tell them what had happened and when they asked him about the tiger, he said that he was on his way.

A few days later the tiger-child reached Lora-Phong, and his parents did not welcome him but abused him saying, 'You were going to bring us plenty of food; where is it?' The tiger replied, 'Ever since I left home I have had nothing to eat and now I'm so hungry that I'm going to eat you all. First of all I'll eat you, mother.' He tried to kill his mother but she hit him with a bamboo spoon. So he turned away from his mother and attacked his father, but he hit him with a bamboo arrow. The tiger backed away growling and his parents said to him, 'We are your father and mother and yet you want to eat us. After this you will always live in the forest. If now you go down to the plains of Assam, the people there will certainly catch you in their nets and kill you. If you go to the country of the Monpas, they will kill you with their cross-bows. If you go to



the country of the Hrussos, they will kill you with their poisoned arrows. If you go to the country of the Buguns, they will kill you with their traps.'

When he heard this the tiger was frightened and ran away into the forest and has lived there ever since.

Phumphulu and Muinini went home and their dog followed them. This is why the dog always looks after people's houses and when they miss their way on their journeys he leads them back to the right path.

The marks on the tiger's body are those made by Muinini when she beat him with the bamboo spoon.

B3 : Bugun. The tiger-child (2). (Elwin, 1958, p. 414)

Zongma, the greatest of all, had a son called Phumphulu. When the boy grew up he left his home and went to find a wife. He travelled towards the east where there was living a daughter of the Sun whose name was Muinini. Phumphulu loved her and they lived together as man and wife. In due time Muinini gave birth first to a tiger-cub, then to a human boy, then to a dog, then to every kind of grain, then to wild roots and at last to a human daughter. They all lived together and at first were very happy.

But when the tiger grew up, his teeth became long and sharp and he went to his mother and said, 'I am hungry; give me some meat to eat.' His mother said, 'There is no meat here; what can I give you?' The tiger said, 'If you don't give me some meat to eat, I will eat my brother and sister and the dog.' Muinini was frying maize at the time and in her anger she beat the tiger with the hot spoon.

The tiger ran weeping to his father who was stringing his bow before going out to hunt. The tiger told him how hungry he was and said, 'I shall eat my mother.' His father got very angry at this and beat him with his bow, telling him to get out of the house at once.

Ever since, the tiger has lived in the forest and has carried on his body the marks of his beating with the bow and the spoon.

The tigers of B2 and B3 are combinatory variants of the grandmother of B1. She represents culture taken to its extreme: the tigers are the antithesis of culture. The episode of the striking with a burning log in B1 is present in B2 and B3, where the tiger child is struck with other instruments of culture: a cooking-spoon and a bow or an arrow.

B1 : Grandmother strikes son-in-law with instrument of culture  
(Extreme of culture)

B2, 3: Tiger is struck by his parents with instruments of culture  
(Antithesis of culture)

The grandmother is cannibal, like the tiger-child, but more so, for she succeeds in eating her blood-kin. The grandmother tries to deny reciprocity, and the relations of tiger to man in B2 and B3 are non-reciprocal. The tiger is in opposition to the dog, whose relation to man, in hunting societies, is clearly reciprocal. Man feeds the dog, and the dog provides food for man.

Non- Reciprocity	B1 : Grandmother does not feed grandchildren. They feed her.
	B2 : Tiger feeds his parents. They do not feed him.
	B3 : Tiger does not feed his parents. They feed him.

In a Hrusso myth, a tiger is also non-reciprocal, but he is so in the same way as the grandfather of H2, he gives gifts and escapes from reciprocity.

H3 : Hrusso. The tiger and the frog. (Elwin, 1958, p. 311).

A tiger and a frog were friends. The frog used to go to visit the tiger's house and the tiger always gave him a good meal of meat. One day the frog said, 'Friend, you always give me very good food when I visit you. Now you must come and pay me a return visit.' The tiger replied, 'Friend, I am a meat-eater. If you can give me some meat I will certainly come to your house.' The frog said, 'Of course, you will have what you like; come tomorrow to my house.'

The frog went away rather worried how to feed the tiger properly and went all over the place to try and find some meat for him. Presently, as he was going along the bank of a river he came across a horse which had come down to drink water. The frog hopped on to the horse's back and tried to bite off some of his flesh, but the horse kicked him and broke his legs. This is why even today the frog cannot walk straight.

The frog made his way slowly and painfully back to his house and a little later the tiger arrived for his visit. The frog received him with honour and made him sit down. But he felt very ashamed that he had no meat to offer him. So he crept slowly up to the loft and there began to remove the flesh from his own legs. This hurt him very much and he cried, 'O mother, I am going to die.' The tiger heard him and climbed up to see what was the matter. When he saw that the frog had cut off his own flesh for him, he felt very bad about it and said, 'Friend, there was no need for you to do this. In any case, I wouldn't eat your flesh.'

He comforted him as well as he could and went away. But the frog felt so ashamed that he left his house for good and went to live in the river.

This is why the frog always lives in the water and why his legs are so thin.

The frog of H3 is the inverse of the tiger of B2 and B3:

- H3 The tiger feeds the frog, but the frog cannot get meat for the tiger.
- B2 The tiger feeds his parents, but they cannot get meat for him.
- B3 The parents feed the tiger, but cannot get meat for him.

H3        The frog tries, unsuccessfully, to make the tiger cannibal.

B2,B3    The tiger tries, unsuccessfully, to be cannibal.

H3        The frog begins to live in the river, and gets his thin legs.

B2,B3    The tiger begins to live in the forest, and gets his stripes.

The frog is a variant of the husbands of H1 and H2. All try, unsuccessfully, to link distinct elements: land and water in H3 and H1, and earth and sky in H2. The tiger of H3, who is like the grandfather of H2, affirms the inversion between the grandfather and the grandmother of B1, who is like the tiger of B2 and B3:

Grandfather (H2) : Grandmother (B1) : : Tiger (H3) : Tiger (B2, B3)

It is suggested that the inversion between the benevolent Sun grandfather and the malevolent grandmother, who both represent the extreme of culture, reflects a real difference in the Hrusso and Bugun attitudes towards culture and the realm of exchange. Both characters have negative attitudes towards marriage-exchange, but the grandfather represents the zenith of the Hrusso system, the grandmother the nadir of any system. To take culture to its extreme is to suppress one's link with nature; it is to refuse to identify with the other and to identify only with oneself. It is incest, in a sense: one lives for oneself through oneself. It is suggested that the Hrusso see this as an ideal because their society is feudal, and suppresses other tribes. The Bugun, who suffer from the tendency of exchange towards identification with the self and the suppression of others, but whose own society, having two classes,

contains the seeds of this within it, see this "incest through culture" as a threat. Man in this state would cease to be cultural, he would identify himself with the worst aspects of wild animals. This is emphasised in the grandmother. She is worse than the tiger in Bugun myths, for she succeeds in cannibalism. But she is also worse than the real tiger of the forests, who eats man; for she eats her own blood-kin.

CHAPTER II  
THE COMPLETE WIFE  
Part One : The Earthly Waters

Any classification of things into an ordered system of categories entails that intermediate categories or elements must be marked in a special way. For the English classification of animals, Leach (1964) has demonstrated that ambivalent animals are marked by "taboo" or a special ritual value. This is even more intense for animals which tend to intrude into a category or location apart from their correct one; they are thought of as dangerous because they are animals "out of place".

In myth, ambivalent animals are of great positive significance, for they are able to mediate between opposed categories. Hence the importance of the jackal and the crow in North American mythology, for these, as carrion-eaters, come between carnivorous and herbivorous animals (Levi-Strauss, 1963). The fox is important in European folklore because it is a wild animal (not game), but is hunted as if it were game. Myths tend to amplify the ambivalence of such creatures in mythological monsters which combine the parts of two or more animals, or are part animal and part man. The snake which can change into a man in B1 and S1 is such a monster, akin to mermaids and satyrs. In Greek myths, Echidne, who was half lovely woman and half speckled serpent, was the mother of many monsters, including the Chimaera, a fire-breathing goat with lion's head and serpent's body, and the Sphinx, a winged lion with a serpent's tail (Graves, 1955, p. 127, 130).

Among intrusive animals the most dangerous are those which intrude into the home of man, or locations of primary value to man (Tambiah, 1969). In myth, great importance is attached to this phenomenon, on a more general level. Parts of the natural world which intrude into the cultural activities of man are highly charged with significance. Fishing or hunting poison in South American myths is of positive importance because it is a part of nature which has been brought under man's control (Lévi-Strauss, 1964, pp. 285-6). But where nature intrudes into the cultural or social activities of man there is always a contradiction; the control of nature by culture is never complete. Even in the areas where the cultural ordering of nature is most vital to man, nature always tends to re-assert itself and retains an uncontrollable residue. The cycle of alliance, fundamental to social relations, is dependent on the natural phenomena of sex and childbirth. B1 and S1 use ambivalent and intrusive creatures to signify the inevitable place of nature in the cycle of alliance, and the conflict which results between natural and social relations.

It has been shown that the use of the categories of land and water in these myths may emphasise distinctiveness. In the scheme drawn up by Leach, the primary discrimination is into categories of warm-blooded creatures, beasts and birds, and cold-blooded, fish. Between these comes the highly ambiguous category of insects and reptiles. The greatest "taboo" value is vested in these creatures, taking the form of hostility in behavior and thought; and the strongest hostility is towards

the most anomalous creatures, in relation to the major categories, snakes, which are land animals, but have no legs, and lay eggs.

Tambiah, in his analysis of the classification of animals in a Thai village (1969), shows that snakes may be even more anomalous, and evoke even greater hostility on three counts. Firstly, they are unclassified in the major categories because there are both land and water-snakes. Secondly, creatures which leave their own element and trespass on another are regarded as inauspicious and hated. (Snakes do not appear to be placed among these creatures by the Thai villagers. But the principle is clear from their treatment of the water-monitor). Thirdly, creatures which leave their own element and invade a location or habitat of primary value to man are highly inauspicious. If a toad is found in the house, a special ceremony has to be performed. The same rule appears to apply to the snake.

It is possible to make a generalised statement that in all cultures the snake is *prima facie* the most anomalous creature, and that, if it is seen as a trespasser between elements or an invader in relation to man, it will be regarded as highly inauspicious. In Europe, as in Thailand, snakes are regarded as dangerous, evil and enemies of man. They are thought of as poisonous, although not all of them are. In English, the snake stands for the worst kind of enemy, the treacherous or concealed enemy (thus the expressions "a snake in one's bosom", "snake in the grass".) In Christian symbolism the serpent is synonymous with the Devil; in many myths the snake is the cause of the transition of man from nature to culture (the snake in The Garden of Eden), or is



a mediator between life and death (Hermes' wand was decorated with snakes; in the Gilgamesh Epic of Mesopotamia a snake eats the plant of eternal life, thus depriving man of it).

There are two other aspects of the snake-husbands in B1 and S1 which are of importance in understanding their full significance. They are clearly anomalous, trespassers and invaders. But they also change into men when they cross from water to land. And they have supernatural or super-cultural powers: the snake in B1 controls natural fertility, the snake in S1 helps the girl to weave better than anyone else.

The Nagas of Hindu mythology are sacred water-serpents, which also have the power of transformation. Tibetan mythology probably borrowed its version of these, the Klus, from India. The associations of the tribes of Kameng Frontier Division with Tibetan Buddhism are closer than those with Indian Hinduism. The Sherdukpen and the Bugun both have origin-myths concerning migrations from Tibet. The Sherdukpen practice a form of Buddhism and have long been closely linked with the Tibetan lamaist monastery of Tawang, in Monpa country to the north. At any rate, a link exists between the snake-husband myths and the beginning of the Tibetan Epic of Gesar of Ling. This religious and national hero was born of a union between a female Klu and a god. A mediating god, Padma Sambhava, visits the underwater kingdom of the Klus, and cures an epidemic which he has himself caused. In return he demands the girl. She follows him up to earth, lives in mortal form among mortals, and gives birth to the hero. (David Mac-Neel, 1933, pp. 63 ff.)

The structure of this story inverts Sl. Instead of a snake-man taking a girl from earth to be his wife underwater, a snake-woman is taken from underwater to be a wife on earth.

The symbolic and mythological value of the Naga is most clearly set out in Tambiah's very full material on the Thai village. The use of this material as a reference point does not take the analysis too far from its starting point; for the cultural links of Buddhist Thailand with Buddhism and Hinduism in the Indian sub-continent are clearly evidenced, and there is therefore an external basis for assuming a common element in Thai thought and that of the Sherdukpen and Bugun. In discussing animal classification, Tambiah points out that the otter is regarded as highly inauspicious, partly because it is the counterpart of the dog, but wild and aquatic, but also partly because of its linguistic association with the Naga; it is called "Naag" which is also the term for the mythical water-serpent. Tambiah suggests that the otter symbolises the negative aspects of the naag. The naag is a multivalent symbol, representing rain and fertility, as well as enmity and benevolence to man. In myth, it is "the servant and protector of Buddhism, and in rain-making mythology and ritual, the opponent of human beings." (Tambiah, 1969)

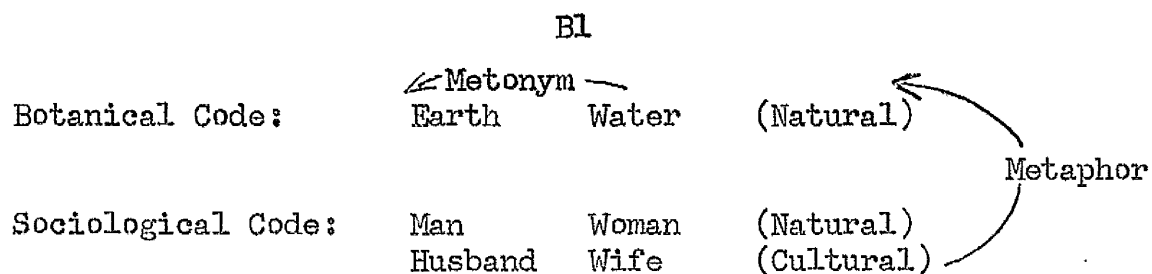
In another work (Tambiah, 1968) the identity of a being called Phra Uppakrut is discussed. In a reference to Thai national ritual, Uppakrut is identified with Phra Upagota, the Lord of the Nagas. Tambiah gives three identifications of Uppakrut by the villagers. The first

two are of especial interest. In a story given by elderly and learned informants, Uppakrut is the son of mermaid, who swallowed the Buddha's sperm. Ordinary laymen said that Uppakrut was a naag or water-spirit. He lives in the water, at the same time, the water is Uppakrut. According to both sets of informants Uppakrut is invited to their main ceremony to protect the village against Mara, who would otherwise let loose human violence and natural disaster. Above all, the villagers identify Uppakrut with rain. Since he is a servant of Buddhism, rain can thus be controlled by Buddhist rituals. But as a swamp spirit he always preserves his identity and autonomy. Tambiah thus sees in Uppakrut, the naag, "the universalising aspect of Buddhism; its attempt to bring nature under man's metaphysical control; but its comprehensiveness must remain partial, for man's control over nature is always incomplete."

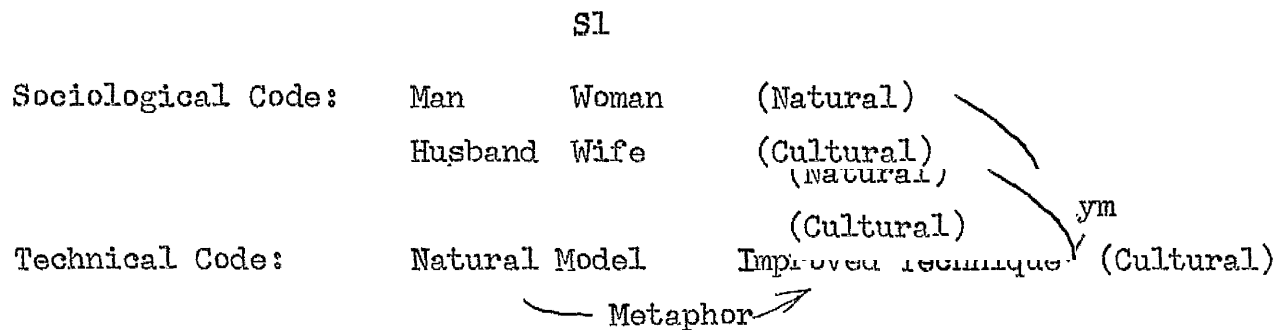
Tambiah points out a similar opposition, though transposed to a different level, in the Hindu and Buddhist use of naga symbolism. Hindu myths oppose the Naga, as the earthly waters, the subterranean creature, and the eternal life-force, to the Garuda (a mythical bird close to the eagle), representing the sun-principle, free from the bondage of matter, the higher principle of the infinity of heaven. (Zimmer, 1946, ch. 3). In Buddhism the naga is more of a mediator, he combines the opposition within him. Thus he has the dual role of pious devotee and the representation of animality. As the life-force motivating birth and re-birth, he is the symbolic vehicle for Buddha's conquest over life. (Tambiah, 1968, p. 87; Zimmer, p. 68).

If the oppositions mediated by the Naga in the symbolic system of the Thai villagers and the myths of the Sherdukpen and the Begun seem humbler than the lofty principles opposed in Hinduism and Buddhism, the thought process underlying the mediation, which makes the Naga the appropriate symbolic vehicle in all the cases, are the same. There is no dichotomy of higher and lower in religious thought. The two main oppositions in Naga symbolism are that between hostility and benevolence, and that between the control of nature and its uncontrollability. Although nature can be controlled, to some extent, there is always a residue which is hostile and outside man's control.

The snake-man in Bl operates in the two codes of human and plant fertility. In both cases separate entities must be united. The union of earth and water is essential to the fertility of plants, the union of two kin-groups is essential to the natural process of reproduction for cultural man, and to the forging of the links of exchange by which man becomes cultural. The sociological code operates on both natural and cultural levels. By its metaphorical association with the botanical code, it infuses the latter with some of its cultural elements. Within the botanical code, earth and water are linked by metonymical association: they must come into contiguity.



In S1 the sociological code is linked with the technical code. The snake-man, as a snake, improves the technical art of weaving. Within the technical code the terms are related metaphorically, for the snake provides a natural model for the improvement of a cultural technique. The links between the codes are metonymical; a part of the natural side of the sociological code, a natural sex partner, comes into contiguity with the cultural technique of weaving. Thus in two ways a natural element is imparted to the cultural technique:



The structural elements of the two myths are isolated in the following table. The episodes concerning the children are omitted for the present. Each element represents a point in which either natural relations or cultural relations are stressed, to the detriment of the other.

	B1		S1		
	Natural Relations	Cultural Relations	Natural Relations	Cultural Relations	
	The snake crosses from water to land		The snake crosses from water to land		1.
	Girl sees him as a snake	Girl sees him as a man	Girl sees him as a snake	Girl sees him as a man	2.
		He comes to the house as a man	He comes to the house as a snake		3.
	He changes to a snake in the house Mother drives him out			He helps the girl to weave	4.
	He takes away water	girl goes to live with him as a wife		He comes to marry the girl	5.
		Girl goes to live with him as a wife	2nd snake kills the 2nd girl	Girl goes to live with him as a wife	6.
			2nd snake kills the 2nd girl		7.

This table is only sketchy and, to some extent, arbitrary. But it is sufficient to illustrate the oppositions between natural and cultural relations and between hostility and benevolence, inherent in the snake-man.

In horizontal column 1, in both myths, the snake emphasises the inauspicious aspect of nature by crossing from one element to another. In column 2 he demonstrates his ambivalence: he is both natural and cultural. Column 3 is opposed to column 4 in each myth, but there is a reversal of the oppositions between the myths. In B1 the snake-man comes to the house representing a high form of culture and humanity. He is dressed like a rich Monpa. (The Monpa are a rich Buddhist people to the North of the Sherdukpen.) As such, his mother-in-law is very willing to accept him as a son-in-law. But once inside the house he changes to a snake. He thus becomes an anomalous natural creature invading the house of man - the height of inauspiciousness and the negative power of nature. The mother-in-law treats this manifestation accordingly, she drives him out with a burning log, which, since it is connected with fire, is an instrument asserting cultural superiority. The change from man to snake, in the house, represents clearly the residue of nature uncontrollable by culture. The duality inherent in the Naga symbol is enhanced in B1 by its combination with the dangerous and invasive character of the real snake.

In S1 the natural and dangerous aspect of the snake coming to the house in column 3 is neutralised by his cultural usefulness ~~and~~ in

column 4. He is still treated with fear by the girl's relatives and neighbours, but without hostile reaction. The negative and dangerous side of the dualistic character of the Naga is enhanced in S1 by a dichotomisation of snakes. The real snake in column 7 acts as the opposite of the snake-man, displaying the characteristics attributed to snakes in many cultures, of treachery and enmity. Between columns 5 and 6 there is an opposition in B1, corresponding to the duality of the snake-man. By taking away water the snake emphasises his negative natural aspects, and the uncontrollability of nature; in column 6 his relation to culture is emphasised by the finalisation of his marriage to a human girl. In S1, columns 5 and 6 both emphasise the cultural character of the snake, he marries the girl with full ceremony, and takes her home as his wife.

The message of the myths is that marriage is a highly ambivalent institution, it has a marked natural side which conflicts with its social function and cannot be brought entirely under the control of culture. The social function of marriage is to create social relations between kin-groups. Marriage-alliance links two groups in friendship who would otherwise be enemies. The hostility of groups of men is thus brought under control by marriage, just as the Naga, who represents the rain, is brought under control by Buddhism. But in marriage and alliance, sex is the uncontrollable residue of nature. Enemies who become allies are like snakes who cross boundaries. The son-in-law who is allowed into the house to sleep with his wife is like the snake who invades the house.



The snake side of the snake-husbands represents the sexual side of a marriage-partner, the human side his relation to his wife and her kin as a husband. In many Indian tribal societies a man is a sex-partner before he becomes a husband. Among the Sherdukpen, young boys and girls, on attaining puberty, "start sleeping separately with their friends in batches, and thus get opportunities for making love and choosing mates." (Sharma, 1961, p. 55) It is significant that in B1 the snake is spoken of as a husband before there is a ceremony; marriage might well be only a regularisation of an existing situation. Any suitor would appear to his future parents-in-law as a sexual partner or a future husband. In S1 the girl's mother sees the snake-man only as a snake, and thinks of him as an undesirable partner. In B1 the mother reacts with hostility when she sees him as a snake, although she is perfectly willing to accept him as a rich Monpa. The girl herself sees the snake as snake and as man in both myths and is not worried by this. In S1, when the snake comes to marry her, the girl sees him as a man, whereas her kin see him only as a snake. To the girl, husband and sexual partner, the social and natural sides of marriage, are the same thing, and she can accept both. But her kin, who are glad to accept a husband, cannot accept his natural side.

By their failure to accept that a husband must have both a natural and a social relationship with their daughters, the mothers-in-law in B1 and S1 reject even the social link which they desire. They become non-reciprocal, for they are not prepared to give a complete gift.

The daughter in B1 is caught in the contradictory situation of trying to combine her relationship with her own kin with her relationship to her husband. It is contradictory because it is only by being a complete wife to her husband, and thus no longer a daughter to her parents, that she brings about the social and cultural relationship of alliance between her husband and her parents.

The snake is an even clearer carrier of meaning for the sexual side of marriage because of its obvious phallic symbolism. The parallel <sup>plant</sup> between sex and/fertility needs no labouring. But it may be added that the association of the two in terms of the parallelism of water, as a fertilising element, and a sexual or marital union between a human girl and a water-serpent is found elsewhere in myth, and also in ritual. The Kikuyu of East Africa worship the snake of a certain river, and every few years they marry the snake-god to women (Frazer, p. 191). In myths the theme is widespread, from Japan to Scotland. Very often it is the sacrifice of women which the serpent, dragon, or other monster requires. (Ibid., p. 192). Another link can be perceived between S1 and B1, on the one hand, and H1 and H2 on the other, on the grounds that H1 and H2 have been linked to myths in which men of humble birth must perform a great feat to gain the hand of a princess. In such myths it is often the conquest of the water-serpent, who demands the princess, which is the necessary qualification. Myths dealing with problems of hypergamy, which may tend to marriage by choice (Lévi-Strauss, 1969, p. 475), are the inverse of myths which deal with problems arising from marriage by choice.

The conflict between natural and social relations appears in Scotland in a ballad of a seal. The seal is very like the snake, anomalous as a mammal who lives in the sea, with a tendency to trespass on the land. In the ballad "The Great Silkie (seal) of Sule Skerrie" the seal comes to collect his child from a human nurse, and foretells his own death and that of the child at the hands of the man whom the nurse will marry. Here the seducer (natural) and the husband (social) are separated, and the conflict appears between them.

The episodes of the children in S1 and B1 are also concerned with the place of nature in the cultural cycle of alliance. By intermarriage groups are brought into social relations. But with the birth of children a biological link is brought into being between the wife's kin and the husband's kin. The groups were at first distant; through alliance they become close socially; with the birth of children they become close naturally. The parts of the myths concerned with the children deal with a different conflict from the parts dealing with marriage; they deal with a conflict between two types of natural relations, those between humans, and those of humans with animals:

B1

Natural Relations

S1

Human	Human-Animal	Human	Human-Animal
The first children are brought into the house	Their grandmother cooks and eats them		
The second children come to the fields	Their grandmother cooks and eats them	The children welcome their grandmother	Their grandmother sees them as snakes and is afraid

In B1 the grandmother treats the children like animals for food, and in S1 the grandmother sees the children as animals, which are not food. The replacement of the relationship between man and children by the relationship between man and animals is a change from a close to a distant relationship, or a change from a natural relationship, with moral content, to one without moral content.

The children of S1 are ambivalent; like the husband they are both human and animal. But whereas he is involved in a cultural improvement, they are purely natural. In B1 the children are not ambivalent, they are purely animal. When the snake-husband enters the house and changes to a snake he represents nature, uncontrolled by culture. When the first children are brought into the house, they are controlled by culture, for they are wrapped in a cloth and placed in a container. When the snake-husband is driven away by the mother-in-law, he represents the malevolence of nature, opposed to men, for he takes away water. When the second children come to the mother-in-law, bringing water back, they represent the benevolence of nature, helpful to man.

	Cultural	Natural	Controlled	Uncontrolled	Benevolent	Malevolent
Ambivalent (Man-Animal)	S1 Husband	S1 Children		B1 Husband		B1 Husband
Unitary (Animal)			B1 1st children.		B1 2nd children	

The significance of the oppositions controlled/uncontrolled and benevolent/malevolent in B1 needs explanation. That the first children are controlled is important because children are natural creatures who must be brought into the social world by the cultural process of socialisation. That the second children are benevolent is important because children eventually become useful parts of the cycle of alliance.

The first children are brought into the house. But they are not out of place there, for as children they should be brought up in the house. But they are still natural creatures, and have a strong negative sacred value, both as newcomers and because they have just undergone the extreme physiological process of being born. The dangerous potential must be neutralised by the interposition of a cultural object, a container, between them and the rest of society. Their grandmother replaces the cultural object, which neutralises a close natural relationship, by a cultural process, cooking, which should be used to neutralise a distant natural relationship, that between man and the animals which he eats. (The function of the mediating instrument as protecting the object from the danger of the subject, rather than the subject from the danger of the natural things, is emphasised by Lévi-Strauss (1968, p. 419.) The consequences of the children being taken out of the container show clearly that the danger which it was intended to mediate was from the grandmother, and not to her.)

The second children, who bring back the water, perform a natural function which is homologous to the social function performed by

children in the cycle of alliance. Their father took away the fertility, just as husbands, taking away their wives, take away the fertility of the wife-giving group. The children bring back fertility, just as the next generation in the cycle gives back wives to its mother's group, and thus assures them of fertility.

This act has another significance. It is not only a natural restoration of water, but a cultural improvement of an agricultural technique, and, as such, is homologous to the action of the snake in relation to weaving. The water comes in a flood from the river, and thus resembles irrigation, which would allow the growing of rice. Like the snake who helps in weaving, the fish-children provide a natural model of a superior cultural technique. This interpretation is supported by Mills' evidence that the Bugun grow rice, and the Sherdukpen, whose land is fairly barren, grow very little. But Bugun territory is very fertile, and they are excellent cultivators. The Sherdukpen nevertheless greatly appreciate rice, and exchange salt, which they get from trade with the plains, with the Bugun for rice. (Mills, 1947). This techno-economic difference between the tribes may explain the use of different codes in Bl and Sl. The relations between the wife's kin and her husband and his children represent, in Bl, agricultural fertility. In Sl they do not represent this, instead the techno-economic code concerns weaving, which is a developed art among the Sherdukpen. The Bugun have no weaving (Elwin, 1959(2)). At the end of Sl, when the grandmother receives food, it is very like trade. The Sherdukpen are dependent on trade. They make an annual migration in the winter-months

to stay with their trade-partners, a Hindu group in Assam. (Sharma, p. 9). They also trade with neighbouring tribes, and among the items which they give are woven bags and cloth.

The most striking transformations from S1 to B1 are that the children become fish or eggs, instead of snakes, and that they are eaten. The anomalous quality of the snake-husband disappears in his children. The fact that the fish are in the fields does not render them inauspicious. In the Thai village the flooded rice-fields are always full of fish, which are regarded as a welcome addition to the diet. (Tambiah, 1969). Since they are not anomalous, they are marked as good to eat. This would also apply to the eggs in the house, for animals for food should be brought into the house.

The anomaly of the children arises because as fish, or eggs, they are a very pure type of food. Many vegetarians eat fish and eggs. In the New Testament there is more concern with fish as food than any other type of non-vegetable food. Sinhalese Buddhists eat eggs, although they do not eat meat. The Sherdukpen, who do not eat the flesh of domestic animals, eat wild game and fish, though fish is more important to their diet. Some of them also eat eggs. (Sharma, 1961, p. 28, 38). The episodes of the eating of the grandchildren in B1 are thus highly charged with conflicting significance. They evoke horror by their cannibalistic meaning, but, as animals, the egg and fish are pure food. The conflict conveys the opposition between human relations and relations with animals.



There is a further significance, made clear by another myth of the Sherdukpen.

S2 : Sherdukpen - The origin of fishes.

Fishes were created by God, but denied this. They insisted that they were born of the water. God asked man and other animals to start eating fishes. (Elwin, 1958, p. 316)

God had compassion upon the fishes, and gave them sand to eat with the result that they began to lay eggs. They laid so many eggs and there were so many baby fishes that you could not see the water and when people went to bathe the fishes bit their feet. Then everybody started eating them, but even so there were still far too many. So at last Chungba-Sangyat went to the male fishes and pointed to the baby fishes which were lying in thousands on the banks of lakes and rivers with their mouths open in hunger and said, 'Why don't you eat these baby fishes and the eggs?' The male fishes then started to eat both eggs and babies with the result that soon there was enough room in the water. But ever since female fishes have had to hide their eggs.

In replacing the relations of kinship by those of food, the grandmother is like the fish of S2. It has already been shown that she is like the tiger of B2 and B3, for the same reason. But the real tiger does not eat his own kin; he represents non-reciprocity with man. The grandmother, who replaces human relations by relations with animals, becomes non-reciprocal also.

In B1 there is a reversal of structure which will be seen again in these myths. At first it is an outsider and a creature of nature who is opposed to man. But once this opposition has been mediated, through his children, an insider, who asserts her cultural superiority,

takes on the worst aspects of nature. There is here a demonstration of the principle which Lévi-Strauss sees in South American myths. Man must moderate and mediate all his exchanges with the world. He must show deference towards it and respect his obligations, not because the world may harm him, but because he may harm it - "l'enfer, c'est nous-même". (Lévi-Strauss, 1968, pp. 421-2).

The grandmother seems to identify herself with fish and with tigers. Tambiah (1969) criticises Lévi-Strauss' emphasis that man's identification of himself with animals occurred, once and for all, at the moment in history when man passed from nature to culture. "L'appréhension globale des hommes et des animaux comme êtres sensibles, en quoi consiste l'identification, commande et précède la conscience des oppositions." (1962, p. 145). Through this identification man comes to be able to distinguish between logical properties and between human and non-human. Tambiah argues that there is not just a sense of affinity with animals, nor a clear-cut distinction and separation from these. The two attitudes co-exist in varying intensities, creating a perpetual tension. Through the linking of rules about eating animals and rules about sex and marriage, man both draws nature into a single moral universe and vigorously separates nature from culture.

These myths allow these two points of view to be reconciled by making clear the distinction between man identifying himself with animals, and identifying animals with himself. Lévi-Strauss points out this distinction in his analysis of a Tsimshian myth (in Leach, 1967, p. 32).

The function of man's identification of himself with all his fellows ("pitié" or "identification à l'autrui" as Rousseau puts it) is to enable man to distinguish himself as he distinguishes them. (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 145). The establishment of homologous systems of differences between men and between animals rests on this capacity. So also do the systems of homology between sex rules and eating rules outlined by Leach and Tambiah, and, it seems, the use of animals in these myths to emphasise oppositions and mediations in man's social system of alliance. But eating rules and mythical marriages with animals bring man too close to animals. In B1 and S1 the mothers-in-law try to separate man from animals, social relations from natural relations, and close natural relations (moral relations between men) from distant natural relations (eating relations between man and animals). This is impossible, because natural relations intrude into the realm of social relations. At this point man should identify animals with himself, and bring nature into his own moral universe. The animals which help man in the myths emphasise that this is the true relation between man and animals. But the mothers-in-law, who do not accept this, and reject or eat their animal grandchildren, reverse the direction of the identification. They identify themselves with animals, not, as in the primitive process, by compassion, but by showing that they have worst natural characteristics.

The myths return to the primitive identification of man with animals, and thus to the borderline between nature and culture. The

grandmothers, who emphasise the cultural side of marriage over its natural side, are the point where the myth admits what cannot be recognised in reality. Culture only comes into being at the expense of suppressing the natural side of man. And this natural side has good qualities as well as bad. The modern use of the term "humanity" as a moral value refers to that natural side of man which allows him to identify himself with others.

## Part Two - Beauty and the Beast

The myths dealt with in this chapter are concerned to overcome contradictions in the social sphere of human marriage by using a homologous code based on the relations of man with animals. In such a system of homology oppositions between categories in one code are emphasised by their counterparts in the other. But the system of social categories is itself ambivalent and the categories within it are ambivalent. The ambivalences on the level of system and on the level of categories are reflected in the zoological code by the use of ambivalent animals. The ambivalence of the system of social categories lies in the essential function of the institution of alliance - to make enemies into allies, and thus draw outsiders from one category into another. In a society with prescribed marriage partners this ambivalence should, in the ideal state, be eliminated. But even in such a system there is the theoretical problem of how the prescribed relations were set up in the first place. There is the more essential practical problem that all marriages will not in reality be with prescribed partners. Among the NEFA tribes there seem to be only preferred marriage-partners, and arranged marriage seems to co-exist with a large degree of marriage by choice. Even if this degree of choice is very limited among the Bugun, its existence to a marked extent among their neighbours would explain its place in Bugun myths.

The ambivalence on the level of the categories themselves is due to the crystalization, through marriage, of natural relations into

social relations. The coexistence of marriage by choice with a system in which marriages are theoretically arranged gives rise to a problem which does not exist in a system of pure choice. For in the latter freedom of choice is accompanied by the individualisation of the contract; there are no obligations between groups. But this difference is one of degree, to the extent that there is nowhere a social system where marriage-choice is entirely free, or the contract entirely individualised.

So long as obligations between groups are created by marriage, a wife who is allowed to choose her husband does not enter only into a natural relationship with him, but also brings about social relationships between him and his group and her own kin. In B1 and S1, and in the myths of this section, the wives try to overcome the contradiction inherent in this situation. A wife must marry for the sake of her own kin, to create social relations, but she also marries her husband for himself, a natural relation. In the myths the wives try to do both. But this is impossible, as the myths show, for in order to fulfil her obligations to her own kin, and create effective social relations, a wife must marry her husband for himself. She must be a complete wife, replacing her parents and brothers by her husband. If she is not a complete wife, and fails to satisfy her husband, he will have no reason to be a good ally. The gift of a woman, which should obligate him to his wife's kin, will be incomplete.

B4 : Bugun. The bear-husband. (Elwin, 1958, pp. 367-9)

Long ago there was a Dhammai who lived at home with his sister. They had no one to help them, and since the man himself spent the whole day drinking and smoking, the girl had to do all the work of the house and fields.

One day the man said to his sister, 'Go to the forest and get me some really sweet fruit.' When the girl reached the forest she found that all the best fruit was high in the trees and though she tried to climb up she could not reach it. She was very upset by this, for she thought that if she came back without anything, her brother would beat her. She continued searching frantically until at last she came to a tree where a bear had climbed high in the branches and was enjoying the fruit. When she saw him she thought that if she could only make friends with him he would get some fruit for her. So she stood beneath the tree and sang him a little song:

'My elder brother has sent me to fetch fruit,  
But I cannot climb the trees to get it,  
If you would bring some down for me, how  
happy I would be!'

But the bear replied, 'This fruit is mine and I need it for myself; how then can I give it to your brother?' The girl said, 'I saw you some time ago and liked you so much that I have come to see you again.' The bear said, 'All right, I'll give you some fruit, but what will you give me in return? If you marry me I'll give you as much fruit as you want every day of your life.'

When the girl heard this proposal she burst out laughing and said, 'Of course, I'll be only too glad to marry you.' So the bear threw some fruit down to her from the top of the tree and she picked it up and took it home for her brother.

Now this fruit was so delicious that the brother said, 'You must go every day to the forest and get me some.'

After that the girl went daily to the forest and there she met the bear and every evening she came home with a load of fruit.

But the bear was a clumsy lover and when he took the girl in his arms he tore her clothes with his claws. When the girl returned home with her clothes torn her brother used to ask what had happened and she would reply, 'The difficulty is that the trees which have this particular kind of fruit are covered with sharp thorns and when I climb them they tear my clothes!' The brother gave her new clothes the first day and the second day and in fact every day he had to give her new clothes, and as they were very expensive he decided at least to follow her to the forest and see if what she said was really true.

This time, when the girl reached the tree, the bear had arrived before her and was already up the tree collecting the fruit. The girl called to him but he took no notice and did not reply. But in the end, after she had called to him several times, the bear sang to her saying:

'Is the fruit sweet or am I sweet?'

The girl sang in return:

'The fruit is not sweet, for it is for my brother,  
But you are very sweet, because you are for me.'

When the bear heard this he came straight down from the tree and made love to the girl. Then he climbed up the tree again and threw down the fruit. The girl picked it up and started to return home.

The brother had heard the songs and watched everything that happened. So he quickly went home and arrived before the girl returned. This time when he saw her clothes torn and dishevelled he said angrily, 'How did you tear your clothes?' and the girl, alarmed by his tone, replied, 'If this bothers you so much, I won't go to get fruit for you again.'  
'No, no, that doesn't matter at all. All I want you to do is to bring me this lovely fruit.'

The next day when the girl went to the place the bear was not at the tree, but she called loudly to him and he came. The bear said, 'I don't know what is the matter with me today, but I feel sick and giddy as if I were going to die.'



Now this time the brother had followed with his bow and arrows and when he saw the bear he took careful aim and shot him dead. When the bear fell down, the girl looked round in fright and saw her brother. She rushed at him screaming and crying, 'That was my husband. Why have you killed him?' He replied, 'You are a human being and you ought to marry a human being. How can you marry an animal like a bear?' He caught hold of her and dragged her home.

It is because this happened long ago that Dhammai women never touch bear's flesh.

The brother in B4 is clearly linked to the grandmother of B1. In each case kinsmen of the wife kill an ally who gives them gifts. The ally is always an animal, thus the killing is in one sense an assertion of humanity. But it is also anti-reciprocal, the killer goes full circle and behaves like an animal, denying the cultural principle of exchange. As an animal who gives gifts the bear represents the extension of the human moral order to the natural world - the bear is identified with man. There is here another illustration of the cycle which was seen in B1. The identification of man with nature is the condition on which the code drawn from nature can be used as a homology for social relations. There is then an oscillation between the two extremes, the affinity between man and animals and their separation. The bear becomes like man, and man attempts to separate animals from man. This is impossible as nature is always present in any cultural or social ordering. Thus man comes to identify himself with nature, in its worst form. He is like an animal, for whom the links between brothers-in-law do not curb hostility.

The bear is also an ambivalent animal, but less so than the snake, which invades the house, and less than the snake-man, who is a combination of nature and culture. Bears have a fixed place in the forest with no tendency to trespass. But they are like men because they walk on two legs and are omnivorous. In a myth of the Hill Miri (Elwin, 1958, p. 403), bears are associated with monkeys. Both lived with men at one time. The monkeys were driven out because they did no work. Bears were driven out because they were too quarrelsome. Even now bears are solitary creatures because they quarrel too much among themselves. If the bear is thought of as quarrelsome and anti-social in reality, this adds an extra aspect to the brother's identification with nature in B4. He becomes quarrelsome and denies social relationships; and the result is the isolation of himself and his sister. In a Waneho myth (p. 371) it is said that the bear has brains, but cannot use them. The attribution of semi-humanity but stupidity to bears is a wide-spread phenomenon.

The wife of the bear is caught in the contradiction between the social relation which her marriage should bring about and the natural relation with her husband. This is explicit in the myth, for the bear forces her to declare which side she is on. She wants to be a complete wife, and tells the bear that she is, but continues to live with her brother and carry the bear's gifts to him. The myth does not seem to condemn her for being a bear's wife, or for trying to combine her roles. The tone of the myth indicates that it condemns the lazy and murderous

brother. But the bear must be killed, because the situation of a complete wife who is also a sister is impossible.

Bori 1 : The marriages with animals. (Elwin, 1958, p. 356).

Synopsis. A brother lives alone with his four sisters.

The first makes love to a snake, who comes from the water and can also look like a man to her. He gives her fish to take home to her family. But her brother finds out and kills the snake. The sister turns into a bird. The second sister makes love to a dog, who gives her birds and rats for her family to eat. The brother kills this sister. The third sister marries a tiger, who gives her game. The brother kills her. The fourth sister makes love to a snake, who gives her roots; but the brother kills her also.

This myth allows B4 to be directly related with B1, since it brings together the snake-husband and the bear-husband. All the animals emphasise the aspect of exchange in nature, for they give food to the humans in return for women. But the ambiguity of this situation is intensified, for, except in the case of the tiger, the animals are not husbands, but only lovers. The myth also acts as a link between the "ambivalent animal" myths and H2 and M1, which will be shown to relate the social categories of alliance with their animal counterparts.

There is a connexion between the myths of the complete wife and her animal husband, or lover, and the cycles of "la fille folle de miel" and the "tapir seducteur" analysed by Lévi-Strauss in relation

to South American myths. (Levi-Strauss, 196<sup>6(1)</sup>~~6~~, patic. pp. 253-263). Essentially their roles are concerned with alliance which goes wrong. The "fille folle de miel" eats the honey which is destined by her husband to be given to her kin. The "tapir seducteur" invades the social relations of marriage by seducing wives. In each case the pathology of alliance centres around a natural element within social relations. The honey is a seducer in the alimentary code: it is a natural product, but the appropriate gift from a husband to his wife's kin. The tapir, a sexual seducer, represents sex, which is a natural element in marriage, but may also threaten marriage from the outside. The girl who tries to combine her obligations to her kin with her relationship to her husband is the inverse of the "fille folle de miel" who treats marriage as an entirely natural union. The animals who marry the girl, and give gifts to her kin, are the inverse of the seducer tapir, who is a natural element threatening marriage from outside. The bear and his variants represent the sexual relation within marriage. One aspect of the tapir cycle directly inverts B4. The wives are forced by their husbands to eat the penis of the dead tapir. Dhammai women refuse to eat the flesh of the bear, for a bear was once married to a woman. In the South American myths the eating is metaphorical, because it is all bears, not the bear who had a human wife, that Dhammai women will not eat:

South America: Women forced to eat animal seducer (metonymically)

B4. Women refuse to eat animal husband (metaphorically)

B5 : Bugun. The incomplete Wife. (Elwin 1958, p. 100)

Jan's brothers, Rei and Bai, went down towards the Assam plains in search of the other members of the family who had left their village. They reached Sissini, but when they saw in the distance the great plains with no mountains and no forest, they were afraid and turned back.

On their return they met three brothers and a sister, who had gone to the hills for trade and were now coming back to Assam. The brothers went ahead and the sister lagged behind picking flowers - she picked a flower and smelt it, picked another and put it in her hair. She spent so much time on this that she soon found herself alone. When the Bugun brothers saw the three men they were frightened and hid in the forest until they had gone by. But when they saw the girl by herself picking flowers and putting them in her hair, they were excited and decided to kidnap her and take her home as Rei's wife. When they caught hold of her, she screamed and struggled at first but soon became reconciled to her fate and went with them willingly enough.

When her brothers saw that the girl was not following them they turned back to find her. When the others heard them coming, the girl said to Rei and Bai, 'There is a big clump of plantains not far away. Let us go quickly and hide among them, for otherwise my brothers will certainly kill you.' Accordingly they ran quickly to the clump of plantains and hid there.

The three brothers came to the place and, suspecting that the fugitives were there, fired many arrows into the clump and the arrows stuck in the plantain stems. Then supposing that they had killed the kidnappers and their sister, they returned home.

When they had gone Rei and Bai took the girl to Sachidhah village and there Rei married her, and for the feast they killed two mithuns and a bullock and made a great quantity of rice-beer. But when the girl saw them eating the meat and drinking the beer she said, 'Don't give me any of this meat or beer, for if you do I shall die.' And they all agreed

that she need not eat or drink. But in the party there was an old man who caught hold of the girl and said, 'You have married one of us and you have got to eat whatever we give you.' He forced her to drink a little of the beer and eat a piece of beef, but directly the forbidden things passed her lips she died.

Rei and his brother buried her and after a time bamboos, of the kind we call the 'lightning-bamboo', grew up out of the grave.

At first sight, this myth appears unrelated to B4 or Bori 1. But in structure it is the inverse of B4.

B5	B4
A woman is taken without exchange.	A woman is taken, with exchange.
She goes to live with her husband.	She remains with her brother.
<div> <div>There is a marriage ceremony.</div> <div>The husband is a man.)</div> </div> <div> <div>Culture</div> </div>	<div> <div>(There is no ceremony.</div> <div>(The husband is animal</div> </div> <div> <div>Nature</div> </div>

Two points allow the relation to be made clear. Firstly, the girl in B5 is forced to eat, like the tapir's mistresses; but it is not her husband she is forced to eat, but a mithun. Secondly, amongst almost all the NEFA tribes who keep mithun, it is the essential part of bride-price. (This is so for the Hrusso (Sinha, 1962, p. 83). Also for the Dafla (Simoons, p. 50) and the Apa Tani, if bride-price is paid at all (ibid., p. 68). Among the Sherdukpen the mithun is kept only for trade, and cows, used for milk, and oxen, used for ploughing, are more essential. These figure mainly in bride-price and dowry (Sharma, p. 57). The "fille folle de miel" who is a bad wife, because she prevents her

husband fulfilling the obligations of alliance, does so by eating the honey which he should give to her kin. The girl in B5 tries to avoid eating the mithun, which, it is suggested, represents the gifts which her husband should give to her brothers; when she is forced to do so, she dies.

B5 is the complement of B4. In B5 the girl also tries to combine her function of linking social groups with her relation to her husband, by insisting that her husband fulfil his obligations to her kin. Again the myth indicates the impossibility of the situation, and the marriage is ended by the death of the wife. The transition from B4 to B5 seems to demonstrate, in another way, the difference which Lévi-Strauss suggests between our civilisation, whose motto is "l'enfer, c'est les autres" and that of myth-making peoples, for whom "l'enfer, c'est nous-même". In our society there is a strong tendency to feel like the brother in B4 towards outsiders who become sisters' husbands. It is expressed in the phrase - "I wouldn't like my sister to marry a Negro, a Jew, etc.". The feeling is very real despite the fact that the phrase has become a joke. Perhaps it has become a joke because of its intense unconscious meaning. But there is no complement in our society; we do not see ourselves as the outsiders might see us, as bad husbands for their sisters. In B5 the myth admits that the insider brothers-in-law behave as badly, or worse, than those whom they will not accept as husbands for their sisters.

In the story of Beauty and the Beast there is a contradiction similar to that in the NEFA myths. A man steals roses from the Beast. In return he must give his daughter to the Beast; she must marry him for her father's sake. It is only by becoming a complete wife to the Beast, by coming to love him for himself, that she is able to transform him into a man. In B<sup>4</sup> the wife who tries to combine her function as a sister, marrying for her brother, with her role as a wife, marrying for her husband, sees her husband die. In Bori 1 and B<sup>5</sup> wives in the same position die. The situation is impossible. Beauty succeeds, she becomes a complete wife. But it is only at the expense of a logical contradiction in the story. For if she has come to love the Beast for himself, he need not change into a man, and when he does, he is not the creature whom she has come to love.

Marrying for one's kin

Marrying for one's  
husband

Real impossibility  
(B<sup>4</sup>, B<sup>5</sup>, Bori 1)

Logical impossibility  
(Beauty and the Beast)

NEFA

South America

B<sup>5</sup>

Fille folle de miel

Wife refuses to eat food destined  
for her kin

Wife ~~eats~~ food destined  
for her kin

B<sup>4</sup>, Bori 1

Tapir seducteur

Husband gives food to allies

Seducer is food for mistress

Social relations

Natural relations



### Part Three - The Evil Spirits

This part passes on to other myths concerning marriages with animals. It is argued that the way in which the myths treat these marriages is based on a homology between the categories into which society is seen to be divided by marriage, and the categories imposed on the animal kingdom. A system is postulated, derived from the myths of different populations, which consists of two main schemes of mediation, one on the sociological level and the other on the zoological. There are differences between the populations in terms of the relative strength of the mediations. These differences can be correlated with differences in social structure, which itself affects the way in which different categories in society are seen.

In the myths, domestic animals, which mediate between man and the animal kingdom, seem to be divided into two main classes: those which are not eaten, which means, for these tribes, dogs, and those which are kept for food, essentially pigs and fowls. The mithun is in a category of its own, and examination of its role will be deferred until the end of the chapter. The mediation which the dog performs is homologous to that performed, in society, by allies, between the kin-group and the rest of society. It is useful to call the rest of society "enemies", on the basis that this term makes a clear opposition with "allies". The mediation performed by pigs and fowls is homologous to that performed by children between the kin-group and its allies:

Kin	Man	Kin	Man
Allies	Dog	Children	Pigs & Fowls
Enemies	Animals	Allies	Animals

The nature of these correlations can be made clear by looking at the major difficulty which they present. The metaphorical association of sexual relationships and eating relationships has been attested for many cultures, and seems to be nearly universal. More specifically, Leach (1964) and Tambiah (1969) have shown that this association allows a correlation between social relationships and relationships with animals on the basis of the parallel between marriage and sex-rules and eating rules. The correlations above seem to invert the expected relationship between sex and marriage and eating. The dog, which is not eaten, mediates like an ally, who is married. Pigs and fowls, which are eaten, mediate like children, who should not be married, except that, and this is important, the children of one's sister's husband may provide marriage partners for one's own children in a system of restricted or generalised exchange. There are various reasons for this. Firstly, there is no reason why a universal metaphorical association should always determine relations of homology between different levels in every society and in every part of a classificatory system. Secondly, there may be a great difference between the way in which homologous relationships emphasise one another in a linguistic or symbolic system and in a mythical system. Clearly the essential difference is the positive value of all ambivalent categories in myth.

Thirdly, systems of homology do not posit a one to one relationship between the individual categories on each level. The homology is between relations on each level, and makes it possible to say that the relations between two or more terms on one level may be logically equivalent to those between the terms on the other. This amounts to saying that the difference between mediators illustrates the application of the Saussurian principle of the arbitrary nature of the sign to mythical systems. An element, such as "dog" or "pig", has no meaning just through its own intrinsic properties. It gains significance only by its relation to the rest of the system.

Leach's article makes this last difference clear. Although he draws up three scales in such a way that the homology between them might seem like one between the individual terms:

a)	Self	Sister	Cousin	Neighbour	Stranger
b)	Self	House	Farm	Field	Far
c)	Self	Pet	Livestock	Game	Wild animals

he makes it clear that he is talking about a homology by which it is possible to make relational statements which correspond for each set:  $A : B : C : D : E :: A^1 : B^1 : C^1 : D^1 : E^1$  etc. More vital is the fact that in Leach's schemes the position of a particular category in the scale is not necessarily fixed. Thus the animal scale above is different from that he uses when illustrating how certain animal categories are intermediate in a dichotomisation of the main categories, man and animal. Thus:

P	both p and $\sim p$	$\sim p$
Man	"man - animal"	Not man
(not animal)	(pets)	(animal)
TAME	GAME	WILD
(friendly)	(friendly/hostile)	(hostile)

In this scheme pets come between "tame" and "wild", whereas in the other scheme they come between man and livestock.

Tambiah's scheme makes this point even more clearly. He shows that the essential role of the relation between man and dog is to be homologous with the relations between close kin, within the incest-prohibition. Thus eating dog is equivalent to an incestuous relationship. But it is also equivalent, on the spatial level, to a son-in-law crossing over into the parents' sleeping-quarters (p. 441). This crossing-over would also be symbolic incest, since the taboo between mother-in-law and son-in-law is a strong one; but it indicates that if one were trying to make one to one correlations between categories, the dog would correlate with both sibling and husband, which would be a meaningless confusion. The real correlations are between the relations - man : dog, man : sister, parents : daughter's husband. The relation between man and dog may signify any social or spatial relation which the logical properties of the relation are appropriate to signify.

Specifically in terms of the correlation between the zoological and sociological levels as it concerns sex and marriage rules and eating rules, Leach indicates that the scale - from close to distant - is ambivalent. For it reverses direction in the middle; categories which

are too close (dog, cat, etc.) cannot be eaten, categories which are intermediate, sufficiently close, but not too distant (livestock, game) may be eaten, and remote categories (fox, weasel, zoo animals, etc.) may not be eaten. Eating prohibitions are of two marked types in the English system, therefore, those against animals which are too close and those against animals which are too distant. The first type may be coterminous with guilt-associations, the second with associations of fear or awe.

The dichotomy of eating prohibitions may be related to the two types of relationships with animals outlined by Tambiah: affinity with animals, which includes animals in man's own moral universe, and the rigid separation of man from animals, culture from nature. It is to the constant oscillation between these two states that the different mediations in these myths refer. In this process eating prohibitions are of great importance, but they are not necessarily homologous with sex and marriage prohibitions.

The correlations between the sociological and zoological mediations are based also on Leach's assumption that intermediary categories tend to have intense ritual value, or to be "taboo". If normal perception displays only a continuum of objects, and yet it is necessary for man to be able to distinguish them into categories in order to conceptualise, then language gives us the names to distinguish things, and taboo inhibits those parts of the continuum which separate things. (pp. 34-5). Another way of putting this is to say that the areas

"in between" are strongly "marked", in linguistic terminology. In myths the marked categories in the zoological code are points of intense significance, by which homologous marked points on a number of other levels may be evoked.

The primary categories of man and animals are separated by no marked category. There is nothing in reality which is both. The role of numerous mythological "monsters", like the snake-husband, is to fill this conceptual gap. In reality the domestic animals, eaten and not eaten, are the nearest thing to a category combining man and animal, and in myths the ambivalence of these creatures may be stressed; they may be made more marked, by combining them with men. The marked points between man and animals constituted by the dog and by pigs and fowls will be examined separately.

1. Man / dog / animals.

- a) The dog lives with man.
- b) The dog is fed by man.
- c) The dog is reciprocal, he receives food, but also gives it back by helping in hunting.
- d) The dog, by helping in hunting, is engaged with man in a cultural pursuit. But it is the most natural means of raising food in which man engages, and brings man close to two types of wild animals, those which he kills and eats, and those which he may kill, not to eat, but because they are killers.

e) The dog is not eaten (among the Hrusso and Minyong. The Bori eat dog, for which the Minyong condemn them).

f) Man's relations with the dog are such as to bring a part of the animal world, and thus relations with the animal world in general, into the moral universe of man. Obligations exist between man and dog, and a relationship close to friendship between men. This relationship is reinforced because man does not eat dog.

The relations between man and animals brought about by the dog are therefore very appropriate to signify the social relationships with the rest of society into which man enters by alliance. The kin-group relates to the allied group in a special way, obligations, friendship and reciprocity exist between brothers-in-law, as between man and dog. But the alliance also relates the kin-group with the whole of society, it brings about relationships where there were none before. The relationship with allies is itself ambivalent, in two ways. Firstly, allies become friends when they were before enemies. Secondly, the forging of a social relationship with outsiders may have the effect of loosening natural (biological) relationships with kin. Dogs are also animals who come from the animal world to live with man. The relationship with the dog may also loosen relationships, in this case with other men.

## 2. Man / pigs and fowls / animals.

a) The pigs and fowls live with man.

b) They are fed by man.

c) They do not give food back (being killed for food is not reciprocity).

d) By being part of the technical activity of live-stock-keeping, they are engaged with men in a cultural pursuit. But it is a more cultural pursuit than hunting, and separates man from other outside animals.

e) They are eaten. Because of this man becomes more independent of the rest of the world of animals, for he needs them less for food. But at the same time the relations between man and pigs and fowls are like those with outside animals, for both may serve as food.

f) As opposed to relations with the dog, which set up an affinity, on the basis of moral relations, with the animal world, and demarcate categories which may not be eaten, relations with pigs and fowls allow man and animals to be separated, so that relations without moral content exist and categories which may be eaten are set up.

The special way in which the kin-group relates to its allies, though social linking, is altered when children are born from the union, for purely social relations are converted into natural (biological) relationships. This is equivalent to the way in which pigs and fowls convert relationships with the animal kingdom, as set up by the dog, from moral relationships (marking categories not for eating) to non-moral relationships (marking categories for eating).

The kin group is made less dependent on outsiders by the birth of children to its allies, for these may provide marriage-partners for one's own children.



But relationships with children are also like those with outsiders. For one is related to children naturally, as well as socially, and children are always new comers, they are outsiders until they are socialised.

Finally, the two marked points between man and animal and between the kin group and the rest of society alter the relations of closeness and distance between the categories. The dog comes into a close relationship with man, and is different from all other animals. Allies come into a close relationship with the kin group and differ from all enemies. Pigs and fowls extend the close category, but relate to man in two ways. They are close because they live with man, like the dog, but also naturally related, because they are food. Children also extend the close category; they are related to the kin group like allies, by the social bond, but also naturally, by kinship.

A Minyong myth plays an important part in this discussion; it is necessary, therefore, to give an outline of Minyong social structure. The Minyong live further to the East than the Bugun and Hrusso, and have a much larger population. They are one of the larger sub-divisions of a group of tribes, known collectively as the Adis. There is a "nebulous feeling of unity for an Adi people as a whole". (Roy, 1960, p. 211). The Bori are a relatively small subdivision of the same group, living to the North of the group, they act as middlemen between

the Minyongs and Gallongs and the "wilder tribes of the West" (Elwin, 1956, p. 433), presumably the Daflas. But orientation towards the West would bring them into contact with the Bugun and Hrusso.

Roy has written about the Padam, another large group of Adis, and the Minyong together. He does not always distinguish, and it may be assumed that undifferentiated statements apply broadly to both tribes, since Roy tends to differentiate and give information separately where there is a marked difference between the tribes.

The general social pattern seems to be of the segmentary type. The Minyong are divided into two moieties, each divided into a number of named clans, 15 in one case and 16 in the other. The clans are divided again into sub-clans. The sub-clan is strictly exogamous, and the clan "was in the past". (Ibid., p. 215). Villages are fairly large and not clan-based.

Roy states, referring to the Adis as a whole, that "every family feels it its duty to support fellow-members against other families; they align themselves according to sub-clans when there is a misunderstanding or quarrel between members of different sub-clans. Partisanship arranges itself according to clans when the disputants belong to different clans. Among the Minyongs, the moieties claim allegiance in the same way." (p. 215).

Against this clearly segmentary model, based on descent, must be placed the importance of relationships of alliance. It is not possible to infer anything about marriage-preferences from Roy's evidence

or from the kinship terms which he gives, which do not include cousins. He mentions that marriage by exchange is possible, and this seems to avoid the necessity to pay bride-price. The most significant kinship term is "Magbo", which is a classificatory term for all husbands of women of the group, father's sister's husband, sister's husband, daughter's husband and brother's daughter's husband. (Descent is patrilineal).

The alliance relationship seems to set up patricularly strong and lasting links between the husband and his group and the wife's group. A wife stays with her own family after marriage, usually until the birth of her first child. A man never takes his wife to live in his father's house. (He will not be living there himself by the time he marries, at any rate, since the Minyongs have a system of communal dormitories for young men and girls). He only takes his wife away from her father's house when he sets up a new residence. This is likely to be near his father's, for he inherits land from his father. But until he sets up his own residence, he is either a "visiting husband" or lives with his father-in-law. "He continues as a member of his father's family or that of his father-in-law, where as a magbo in its fullest sense he has to stay and render services to him, in exchange for the hand of his daughter." "All the claims (of his father's family) on him cease when he starts his own household or becomes a magbo attached to the family of his father-in-law." (pp. 208-9 The statements are for the Padam and the Minyong.) This must be qualified, because his father

has a claim on his son's labour during the father's lifetime. Children are quite likely to be born in their mother's father's house. Roy states (for the Padam and Minyong) that a man should have his own house with the coming of the first child. The maximum period for keeping a wife at her father's house is generally up to the birth of the third child. But Roy mentions cases where "dual residence" has existed for up to 20 years. (p. 204). It is a woman's own relatives who assist at a childbirth. When she washes herself to mark the end of a period of defilement following the birth, "her father's father, father's mother, mother's brother and mother's brother's wife form a circle around her, to protect her from evil spirits." (p. 196).

As well as being linked by residence, allied groups are strongly linked through the bride-price, or "Are". This is not paid in a lump-settlement. It consists of "a continuous supply of meat by the husband and his relatives to the parents of the wife". This includes hunting-kills and sacrifices; it extends to the clansmen of the husband, who must also give part of their game and sacrificed animals to the wife's parents, and to her clansmen. At marriage these gifts to in-laws are the equivalent of those which an unmarried man is bound to give to his own parents. In the case of rich families, there are additional bulk presentations of meat and vegetable-food at two ceremonies (cf. pp. 206-7).

Warfare seems to have been fairly common in the past, although it is not clear who fought whom or why. But given the segmentary model, which Roy makes clear is present in the minds of the people

themselves, it seems divisions along clan and sub-clan lines would have affected loyalties. Where feuds were fairly common, links of alliance must have been of importance, in indicating those against whom one would feud and setting up a category of mediators in disputes.

There seems also to be much scope for resentment against "magbos". The son of a family may well see his sister's husband taking his place in his own family. The son will not live with his family after marriage, the sister's husband will either live or sleep there, for a time. The sister's husband's children may be born there, and will be more closely connected with the sister's parents, through assistance at the birth, than the son's children. A son of the family would also see lavish gifts going to his parents from the sister's husband. These replace his own, which, after his marriage, must go elsewhere. The strong link between brothers-in-law is ambivalent. It is highly advantageous, but may carry the threat that the sister's husband and his children will replace the son and his children in the affection of his parents, and possibly that the sister's husband may inherit land due to the son, since the sister's husband may live with the parents and work in their fields.

M1 : Minyong. The marriages with animals. (Elwin, 1958, pp. 359-365)

A man lived in the forest with his three sisters. One of the sisters lived at home; the other two used to go with their brother to work in their clearings. One day the brother noticed that the eldest sister had prepared mithun-flesh, rice and beer and was taking

(took it to the river. She stamped on the ground, but no snake)<sup>113</sup>

it to the forest. 'Where can she be going?' he wondered and he left his work and followed her secretly. She went down to the bank of the Siang River and stamped on the ground. A great snake came from the water and coiled himself round her. When the act of love was over, the girl fed the snake and they sat together for a time and then parted. The boy, full of anger, returned home. But he said nothing to the others, and the following day went by himself to the river and stamped on the ground. When the snake appeared, he cut him to pieces with his dao.

The next day, the girl again prepared mithun-flesh and rice and beer and appeared. She searched everywhere and soon found signs that her lover was dead. Full of sorrow she hanged herself from a tree. When the brother saw her hanging there, he was angry and cut her belly open with his dao. A great number of little snakes poured from her and the boy ran away in fright. The snakes followed him. When he stood still and looked back, they ran away, but when he went on they followed him. Since then there has been enmity between men and snakes.

Such was one sister. The second sister used to make very good leg-bands and one day she sat a for a long while making them. Her brother asked her, 'Why are you making so many?' 'It is my pleasure,' she replied. The next day he peeped through the wall and saw the girl tying the cords round and round the legs of a dog. He went in and said, 'Why are you doing such a strange thing?' 'Because this dog is my husband.' The brother was so angry that he went away to another place. But the girl went with her dog-husband to the forest and built a good house. The couple cleared a field and made their living there. In due time three puppies were born.

Meanwhile the brother returned home and began to search for his sister. At last he found her house, but when he arrived both the girl and her husband were working in the field and only the puppies were at home. When they saw their uncle they were very happy and barked loudly, crying, 'Our uncle has come to see us.' Presently the girl and the dog came home and were glad to see

their visitor, the girl because he was her brother, the dog because he was his brother-in-law. They gave him rice and beer, and the dog jumped into the loft and threw down mithun-flesh. The boy ate the rice but quietly threw away the flesh, for he would not eat the gift of the dog.

The following day the girl and the dog bade farewell to the boy and went to work in the field. The boy prepared to return home, but the puppies barked loudly crying, 'Our uncle is going away.' This annoyed the boy and he cut off the head of one of the puppies with his dao. As he did so there came a voice from inside the hearth saying, 'When my parents-in-law return, I shall tell them what you have done.' Astonished, the boy lifted the first stone of the hearth, but there was no one there.

The puppies continued barking and the boy cut off the head of another of them. As he did so there came a voice from inside the hearth saying, 'When my parents-in-law return, I shall tell them what you have done.' Astonished the boy lifted the second stone of the hearth, but there was no one there. Then he cut off the head of the third puppy. As he did so the voice came yet again from inside the hearth saying, 'When my parents-in-law return, I shall tell them what you have done.' Astonished, the boy lifted the third stone, and found a fat grub beneath it. He picked him up and took him home.

After a few days the boy went hunting. He found the bark of a certain tree and threw it on the ground for the grub who began to eat it with great enjoyment. He said, 'Take me to the forest and put me on this tree and I will do well.' The next day, therefore, the boy took the grub to the forest and left him on the tree. The grub stayed there for a long time eating the leaves and bark of the tree, but in the end he went away. Presently the youth went to find him, but there was no trace of him anywhere. He asked the birds where he was, but they could not tell him. He asked the animals where he was, but they could not tell him. At last Siggo-Pareng the water-bird said, 'I know where he is, but you cannot go there alone. Prepare rice-flour for me and I will lead you to the place.' The boy prepared rice-flour and when the bird had eaten it, his droppings turned white and

the boy was able to follow him through the woods. The bird led him to a great rock, and there beneath it was the grub. He was busy making metal bowls (dankis), for he had become Ninur-Botte Wiyu.

Ninur-Botte said, 'I cannot come with you, but you may have these bowls, for I have been making them for you. Carry them away one by one, but as you pass the monkeys' village, see that you make no sound or they will come out and kill you.' The youth accordingly took several of the bowls back to his house, but one evening as he passed the monkeys' village, he accidentally knocked one of the bowls against a tree and it made a ringing sound. The monkeys were offering sacrifice in their dere (dormitory) at the time and when they heard the sound they rushed out. The boy dropped the bowls and ran for his life. The monkeys took their bows and arrows and searched for him everywhere; they did not find him but they did find Ninur-Botte, and they shot him to death with their arrows.

When he heard this, the boy was very angry, and decided to revenge himself on the monkeys. When he reached their village he found that they had gone to the Siang River to fish. He followed them and found that they had left their bows and arrows in a great pile on the bank, and were playing about in the water. 'Now is my opportunity,' he said to himself, and he hurriedly tied up the strings of all the bows so that they could not be used. Then he threw a great stone, plop, into the river. The monkeys, realizing that an enemy had come, rushed to shore and scrambled for their bows. Each thought he had his neighbour's bow when he found his was useless and they were soon quarrelling among themselves. As they were shouting at each other, a bird cried from the sky. The monkeys were frightened and ran to the boy and stood before him. 'What was that noise?' they asked. 'It was a dreadful thing,' he said, 'a most evil thing and it will devour you all.' 'What shall we do?' 'Come with me and I will hide you.'

The boy took the monkeys, who were now shivering with fear, through the forest until he found a great hollow tree. 'Go in there,' he said, 'and you will be safe. I will build a door of wood and leaves and no one will know where you are.' 'That is very good of you,' said the monkeys.



But directly the door was made, the boy lit a fire with his flint and burnt them all to death. But one girl monkey, a very little one, escaped. As she ran away she rubbed her blackened hands on her face and ever since the monkey's face has been black. When she had grown up a little, she lay down one day on her back with her legs and arms outstretched. 'Let something fall on me,' she cried to Doini-Pollo. At that a tiny bamboo leaf fell from the sky; it entered into her and she conceived. A monkey son was born and when he grew up he married his mother, for there was no one else to marry, and the monkey-tribe began again.

When the monkeys had increased in number they asked their grandmother if they might make bows and arrows as of old. But she said to them, 'Beware of men. They are stronger and wiser than we are. It was the madness of fighting them that led to our destruction. Now live peacefully in the forest and forget your bows and arrows.' So ever since the monkeys have lived among the trees and have eaten fruit.

So of the three sisters, one had married a snake and died; the other had married a dog and gone away. Only the youngest sister was left. But one day the brother saw this girl also prepare mithun-flesh and rice and beer and take it to the forest. As before he followed her secretly, and what did he see? He saw his sister meet a tiger and, when the act of love was done, she fed him with rice and flesh and gave him beer to drink. When she came home, the boy asked her in sorrow and anger if she was going the way of her sisters. 'I am going to marry my tiger,' she declared. And the very next day she made a great feast and married the tiger and went to live with him in the forest. There they built a splendid house and every day the tiger went hunting and brought home lots of meat.

After a time, the brother felt sorry and went to see his sister and make friends. The girl was at home when he arrived, but the tiger was out hunting. Although the girl was happy to see her brother, she was frightened that if the tiger came home he would eat him. The brother said, 'Somehow or other you must save me.' So the girl fed him and then hid him up in the rafters and covered him with a basket.

When the tiger came home, he asked for a basket, and the girl put one before him. 'No, I want the one up there,' he said. 'That one is dirty,' said the girl and found another. The tiger was sick into the basket, and his vomit was bits of meat. For this was how he brought the meat home. The girl picked the bits of meat out of the vomit and spread them on the drying-rack above the hearth. The tiger sat down and spread his legs before the fire. He took some rice-beer and when he was warm and at ease, he said, 'Let us have a ponung.' 'And where,' asked the wife, 'are the girls for a ponung? We can never have a dance, for you must always eat up all the dancers.' 'Anyway,' said the tiger, 'there is a most peculiar smell in the house today. It smells to me like a man.' 'Don't be stupid,' said the girl. 'How could a man be here?' 'It's not only a man,' said the tiger. 'It's the smell of a brother-in-law.' 'What a creature you are,' exclaimed the girl. 'Always smelling something! Have some more beer and go to sleep.' The tiger considered his wife's advice and found it good. He had another gourdful of beer and went to sleep. The brother lay up in the rafters all night, but in the morning, when the tiger went out to hunt again, he came down and said, 'Well, I have had enough. I must be on my way home.' His sister fed him with rice and beer, but he refused the meat which his brother-in-law had vomited, and took his dao and prepared to go away. The girl warned him to be careful, and gave him a red skirt and a dog. 'Let the dog go ahead. If he comes running back, you will know that my lord is on the way. Then cut a plantain, tie the dog to it and wrap the skirt round him at the bottom. And you yourself hide somewhere.'

The youth left the house and began to make his way home. He climbed hill after hill, crossed torrent after torrent; the rocks thundered past him as he went. Then suddenly the dog came running back towards him. What did he do? He cut a plantain, tied the dog to it and put the red skirt below. Now it looked like a Gallong girl on her way to Pasighat. The boy hid behind a tree, and the tiger appeared. As he sprang with a great roar upon the dog, the boy came out from his hiding-place and killed him with his dao.

When the tiger did not return home that night his wife wept and in the morning, anxious and afraid, went to find him. She saw his body on the ground and her own red skirt in the bushes near by. At this she felt very sad, and, although it was her own fault, furious with her brother.

Some time afterwards, the youth decided to bring his sister home to live with him. 'She is all I have left,' he thought, 'and at least she makes good beer.' So he went to bring her home. But she was full of anger against him for killing her husband. She showed him nothing but friendliness, however, and made him sit down and gave him food. As he was eating, she took an egg and a knife and slipped away behind the house. Her brother saw this and said to himself, 'What is she up to now?' He got up and quietly went to see what she was doing. He saw her break the egg and smear the yoke over her head and body. She put the knife into her mouth, and as she did so she turned into a great tigress. But he was ready for her and killed her with his dao before she could do him harm.

The myth distinguishes three categories of animals, which it makes husbands; the marriages with these animals, in the myth, are used to emphasise the differences between possible marriage-partners in social life. The dog is distinguished from the snake and the tiger in two main ways. Firstly, he clearly comes into a relationship close to man. His wife makes leg-bands for him and he cultivates fields. He thus moves from nature to culture. Secondly, he is not killed by the brother, though the snake and the tiger are. The snake has no techno-economic role, the tiger is a hunter. The difference appears also in relation to gifts of food. The snake is merely given man's food and gives nothing. The tiger is given man's food, and offers nothing back. But his wife offers her brother vegetable food, and the game brought back by the tiger. The man takes the first, which does not seem to be the tiger's produce, since he is away all day hunting.

But he refuses the game. Although game is a gift between brothers-in-law in reality, it is strongly marked in the myth as an anti-food, for it is vomited up by the tiger. The dog himself offers vegetable food, which the brother accepts, and mithun-flesh, which the brother rejects. Though this is real food, the brother refuses the correct gift between brothers-in-law because his role, as will be shown, is to deny relations of alliance, and to become, like the grandmother who eats her grandchildren, identified with nature.

	Snake	Tiger	Dog
Techno-economic	Unmarked	Natural (hunting)	Cultural (agriculture & domestic animals)
Hostility/non-hostility	Killed	Killed Tries to kill	Not killed
Gifts	Given food, offers nothing	Given food, "offers" anti-food	Not given food, offers real food.

It is suggested that relations between dog and man are seen as homologous to those with good allies. Relations with both snake and tiger are different. The tiger is directly polarised with the dog; he is seen as hostile as opposed to benevolent. Relations with the tiger represent those with enemies, who should always remain outside alliance. The monkeys, in the myth, also represent a part of nature homologous to outsiders with whom the clan does not marry. They make two transitions which are the inverse of the relations between the dog and the tiger:

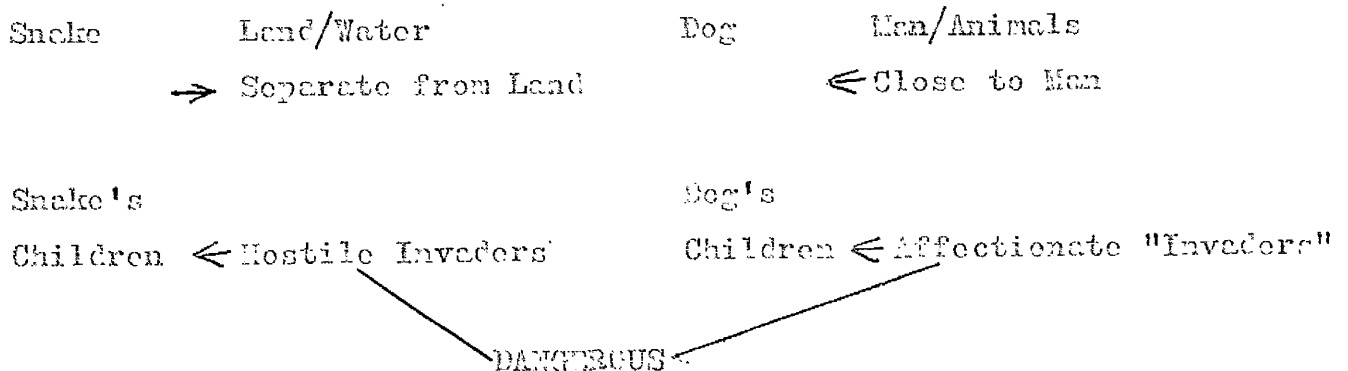
Dog	Cultural	First monkeys	Cultural	Harmful	Tiger	Harmful
Tiger	Natural	Second monkeys	Natural	Helpful	Dog	Helpful

The monkeys in the myth, although they are not marriage-partners, represent, by relations between them, another "alternative" - marriage choice in society. That is the possibility of incest. The monkeys are born of incest and return to nature. The dog cannot illustrate this possibility in this scheme. One reason for the difference between the Thai categories, in which the relations with the dog are homologous to relations within the incest-prohibition, and the mythical categories here, may be in the difference between the cultures. The Thai villagers are not hunters to any great extent. The NEFA tribes are still very involved in hunting, the activity in which the relationship with the dog becomes clearly reciprocal. Also, unlike the Thai villagers, the Minyong are affectionate towards their dogs (Elwin, 1958, p. 352).

But the transformation dog → monkey, in respect of incest-relationships, is a clear change from a metonymical to a metaphorical relationship. Dogs are metonymical men, they may therefore represent incestuous relationships metaphorically. Monkeys are metaphorical men, in the myth they are born of incest, and return to nature. Incest may therefore represent, as part for the whole, their natural character.

The myth also treats of the relation between the clan and the children of its allies, by use of the zoological code. Both the dog and snake have children, but they are treated differently. The snake's children are very hostile, and try to kill man, the dog's children are

very affectionate and man kills them. The difference between the snake's relation to man and the dog's relation to man accounts for the difference between their mythical children. Both snake and dog are ambivalent; they are marked categories which separate major categories. But man brings the dog close to himself, and thus separates the categories man and animal. He separates himself from the snake as much as possible, and thus separates the categories of land-animals and water-animals. The dog, which is brought close to man, may bring the categories man (not-animal) and dog (animal) too close, and therefore there must be a separation. The snake, which is separated from man, tends to come too close to him because it invades his habitat. Thus the children of the dog in the myth are seen as too close (they are too affectionate and try to keep their uncle with them); they are killed because they bring man dangerously close to them. The snake's children are seen as separate, but trying to come too close. Their closeness is dangerous, and in the myth they try to kill the man.

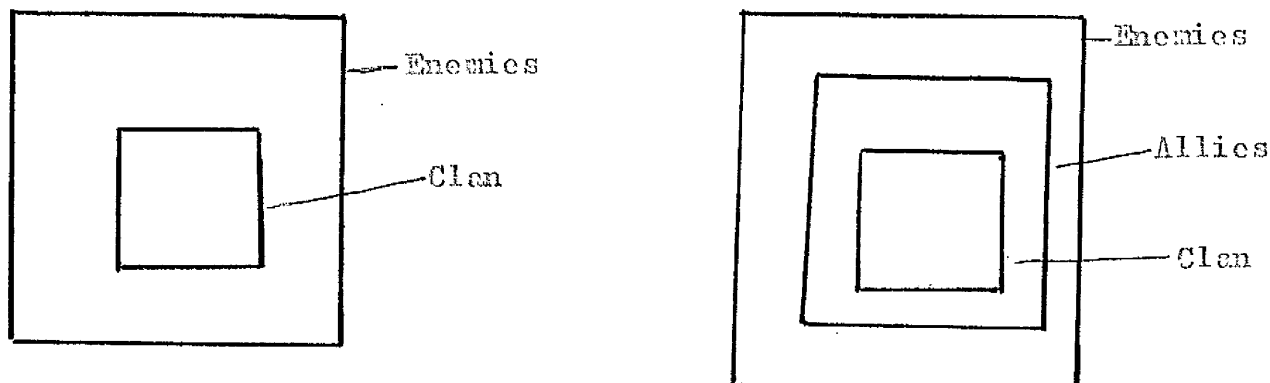


The "cultural grub" represents another aspect of children. He repeats three times "I will tell my parents-in-law what you have done."

Since the only characters whom he could tell would be the dog and his wife, this puts him in the relation of the dog's son-in-law, i.e., married to the puppies. A tentative explanation of this peculiar passage is proposed. The grub combines the properties of children and allies. The common property which he represents is that of an outsider coming in, but not an unwanted outsider, since he is useful once man has helped him. Allies are also outsiders coming in, useful to the clan once they are given wives. Children are always outsiders, newcomers and strangers, but also useful, once they have been "helped" by being socialised. The grub stands between the snake's children and the dog's children:

Snake's children	Grub	Dog's children
Outsiders - too close	Outsider - close	Insiders - too close
Dangerous	Helpful	Dangerous

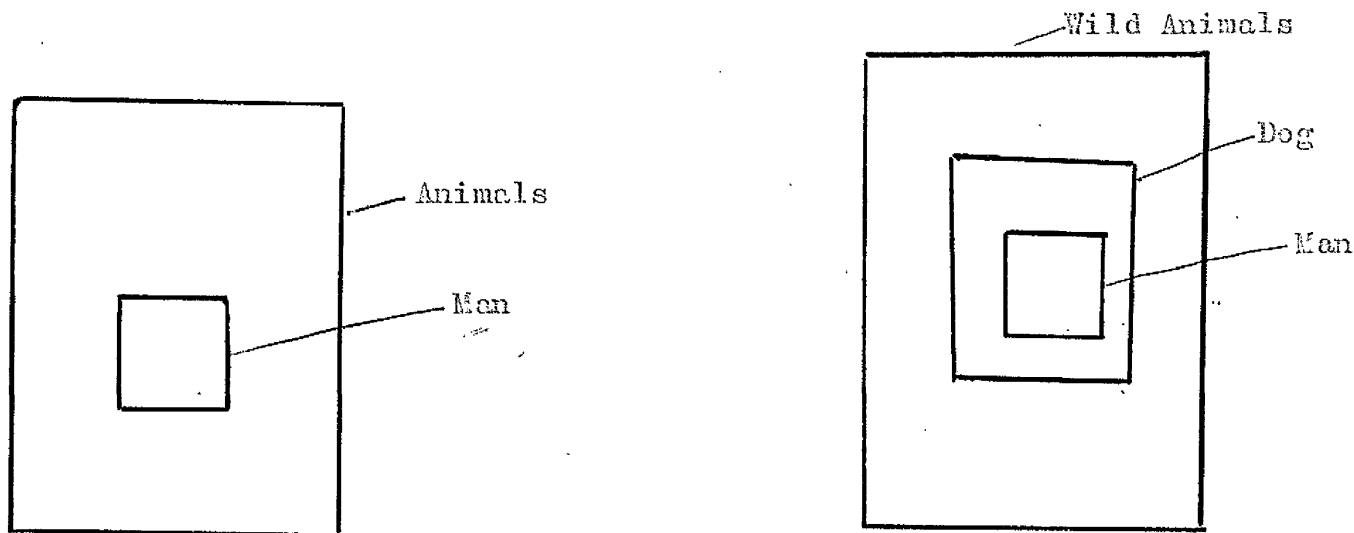
The myth is seen as operating on two codes, the sociological and the zoological, although these are in fact run together in the myth. The mediations in each code operate a dialectic by which oppositions are mediated and new oppositions generated. In the sociological code allies, or "magbos", among the Minyong, mediate the opposition between the clan or sub-clan and outsiders, who are all potential enemies.



But the alliance also introduces a new logical opposition between the clan, linked by kinship and allies linked by social relationships. Since there is a possibility for real resentment between clan-members and their allies among the Minyong, this may also be a real conflict:

Clan	Clan	Clan
	Allies	
Enemies	Enemies	Allies

In the zoological code the dog mediates between man and the tiger and the snake (wild animals), bringing man and animals into relation, as allies bring clan and enemies into relation:





But a second opposition is generated by this mediation. The relations with the dog are more natural than those with other men. So the dog's mediation opposes nature to culture and dog to other men:

Man	Man	Man (culture)
	Dog	
Animals	Animals	Dog (nature)

The secondary opposition may also be a relationship of conflict. It inverts the secondary opposition on the sociological code, on the nature / culture axis:

Man (Culture)	(Nature) Clan
Dog (Nature)	(Culture) Allies

In the sociological code the secondary opposition is mediated by the children of the allies. Children are linked naturally to both groups, as the clan-members are to each other, as well as socially to the clan, as the allies are to the clan. In reality also conflicts between allied groups tend to be reconciled with the birth of children. The customary relations of affection between mother's brother and sister's children found in patrilineal societies recognises this fact. Such relations may be socially endorsed in prescribed patterns of behaviour. Among the Minyong the mother's brother has important relationships with his sister's children of both sexes. He is present after his sister's daughter has borne a child, and before she returns to her husband in her role of wife (Roy, p.196). It is to him that the sister's son comes after he has killed an enemy in war, before he is allowed to go home to his wife (Roy, p. 118).

It is significant that these important relations occur when the sister's children have just passed through states highly charged with ritual value, and of great physical danger. Correlations between childbirth for a woman and killing in war for a man are multifold, but this point cannot be followed up, for the Minyong, on the basis of the limited evidence available. But the presence of the mother's brother between states of danger and the return to normality suggests, in another way, that the prescribed relations may (as such relations generally do) conceal a real ambivalence. The reasons why a man may resent his sister's children have already been outlined. Thus children mediate between clan and allies only to generate a new opposition between children and allies:

Clan	Clan	Clan	Clan	Children
	Allies		Children	
Enemies	Enemies	Allies	Allies	Allies

And this final conflict returns, in a way, to the first. For allies who hate their sister's children are like enemies to them. In M1 the brother who kills his sister's children takes this relation to its logical extreme.

In the myth, however, the zoological code seems to stop short before this secondary mediation. H2 has already made it clear that children are identified with pigs and fowls, in the context of sacrifice. The mediation by domestic animals in M1 is not overtly expressed, but it seems that it is unconsciously present in the structure. The

man who kills his sister's children identifies himself with an enemy, sociologically, but there is also an identification of a man with animals, as in Bl. He becomes like enemy wild animals, the tiger and the snake. The man is an enemy because he kills his sister's children, and the Adis say that they do not eat tigers, snakes and some other predators, because these animals kill their domestic animals. The zoological homology of the man who kills his sister's children is the predator who kills man's domestic animals.

There is a secondary mediation in the zoological code, by pigs and fowls. Man is related to pigs and fowls culturally, as to other men, for livestock-keeping is an advanced form of culture; man is related to the dog through hunting, a primarily natural activity. But pigs and fowls are also opposed to man, for the relationship is one in which man kills and eats them.

Man	Man	Man (Culture)	Man	Pigs & Fowls
	Dog		Pigs & Fowls	
Animals	Animals	Dog (Nature)	Dog	Man

As the last opposition in the sociological code returns to the first, for the ally becomes like an enemy to his sister's children, so the last opposition in the zoological code returns to the first, because man becomes like a wild animal to his domestic animals. Like the tiger and the snake, he kills his own domestic animals.

The role of the dog as a husband in M1 leads back to H2, where a husband becomes a dog. To correlate these myths it is necessary to refer to Adi myths of the coming of seed. For the husband becomes a dog in H2 when he fails to bring seed. The dog is connected with agriculture in M1. And in M2 and B2 the dog is the bringer of seed.

M2 : Minyong. The coming of seed (Elwin, 1958, p. 380) Synopsis

Before humans or animals existed a great tree once stood. A Wiyu tried to cut it down, and the chips turned into land-animals and fish. One chip went underground and turned into a dog. The Wiyu who was living there, Kine-Dene, adopted it as his dog. When men wanted seed they asked Kine-Dene, who put it in the ear of the dog and sent it to them. So men always offer pigs and fowls to Kine-Dene, and give food to the dog, who now lives with them.

Bori 2 : The coming of seed. (Elwin, 1958, p. 377) Synopsis

The first two brothers could not find wives. They met two bitches who were cooking. They married them, and the brothers separated. One brother, Tani, used to go hunting with his wife. He became ill and could not hunt. He was starving, but the bitch was not hungry, because, as he found out, she was eating his excrement. He turned her out of the house. The bitch made friends with a deer. One day they went together to a Wiyu. He killed a pig and gave it to them. Then he gave seed to the dog to take to man. Meanwhile the deer ran off with the meat in his back-pocket. The dog caught him and pulled the meat out, together with some of the deer's flesh. The dog

took seed to Tani, and he told her she might live with him as his friend, but not as his wife. Dogs have lived with men since then.

These two myths have the same underlying structure as M1, although the mediations are merely sketched in. Bori 2 makes the first mediation in the zoological code, and also its homology with the sociological code. Man is related to the dog, which thus brings him into relation with the animal world. But because he comes too close to the dog, and the function of the dog as an intermediary term is to separate the categories man and animal, the dog must then be separated from man. The eating of excrement in Bori 2 corresponds to that in H2, by the pigs and fowls. It acts both to identify the dog with man, and to separate them. There is then an opposition between man and dog. This is mediated by the pig which the Wiyu gives to the dog and the deer. The pig is a bone of contention between the dog and the deer, and thus separates them. The separation of dog and deer is a separation of the dog from the world of other animals. It is also a separation of animals which are eaten from animals which are not eaten. The pig is an apt mediator here, for it is, like the dog, close to man, and like the deer, an animal for eating. Separated from nature, the dog can return to man and is clearly marked as not man, but close to man, and as not wild animal. The ending is satisfactory for the myth, but the logical process is not ended. It could in fact go on ad infinitum. In the myth the dog is close to man, and in a role connected with agriculture.

But in reality the dog is connected with hunting. If the myth, at the end, admitted this, it would begin on another cycle, for the dog, though not wild animal, would go back to being close to wild animals. The myth displays three stages of the oscillation between the identification of animals with man and the separation of the two, a process which is in fact endless:

Identification with man - Dog as wife.

Separation from man - Dog as wild.

Identification with man - Dog and deer separated.

The sociological code is mirrored in the first part of the myth. The dog brings man into relations with animals as allies bring the kin-group into relations with society. And the dog and the man are then opposed, as the kin-group is opposed to its allies. The sociological code is entirely absent in M2. It follows the zoological code through mediations by the dog, and by the pigs and fowls, which are finally also opposed to man by the fact that man kills them in sacrifice. But the homology is with another code, which may be termed the cosmological; there are mediations between man and the supernatural world of Wiyus. The reason is that the number of codes which may be made homologous is theoretically infinite, and that prime mediators in one code may act as metaphors for the relations between oppositions on a number of levels. This will be shown to be the key to the structure of H2.

The reason must first be found for the transformation between the Bori and Minyong myths and the Hrusso myth in relation to the

bringers of seed. In Bori 2 and M2 the dog brings seed, in H2 a husband tries to, and becomes a dog when he fails. It is children who succeed in bringing seed in H2.

The explanation has two stages. First, the common characteristic of the two mediators, which makes them appropriate seed-bringers, can be shown. Second, there is a difference between them which correlates with a difference between the two mythical systems. The common characteristic is that dogs and children are both on the side of nature. The dog mediates between man and animals, but is opposed to man because he brings man into relation with nature. Children mediate between the kin-group and its allies by bringing about a natural relation between them.

Since the coming of seed is synonymous with the origin of agriculture, an advanced cultural activity, one might expect the opposite. But the myths are dealing with a difficulty which results if seed is admitted to be an advanced cultural activity. The opposition Hunting Agriculture correlates with that of Death Life, and both with the opposition Men Women. For men hunt and kill, women garden and bear children. The opposition is clear in the Minyong cycle of prestations at marriage. In the first negotiation an elderly woman of the boy's clan goes to the girl's parents with presents of meat and beer and the proposal is in a traditional form "Oying - ka - dung" - "I have come to you for vegetable". (Roy, p. 204. The statement applies to the Minyong alone, not to the Padam).

But men, who see themselves as more cultural than women, cannot admit that it is the female side which is the higher form of culture. In myths agriculture is made more natural. In a Minyong myth the first agriculturalists are an incestuous pair, as they are in H2. So it is the dog or the children, on the side of nature, who bring seed. (Another solution is to emphasise the male side of agriculture. M2 is doing this, since its only reference to any technical activity is to chopping down the tree, which is like the male role in agriculture, clearing the ground. Bori 2 contains only the male activity of hunting.)

It is an essential structural difference between the Hrusso and Minyong-Bori systems which explains why the two use different mediators as seed-bringers. In the sociological code of M1, as in social life among the Minyong, the first mediation, by allies, is vital. It divides society, from the point of view of the kin-group, into three categories - clan, allies and enemies. The secondary mediation is important, since it brings the clan into closer relations with its allies, but it is dependent on the first. By contrast, it is argued that the Hrusso marriage system gives rise to a dichotomisation of the whole of society into the kin-group and outsiders. Marriage by itself is not able to bring the allied group into an effective relationship with its allies, except by the assumption of unity in the ritual situation, since the distance to be overcome is too great. The possibility of seeing the allies as part of one larger group with the kin-group occurs in reality only



when children are born and establish natural (biological) relationships. The unity aimed at by the ritual is nearly achieved in reality through children.

In the Hrusso mythical system the mediation by allies is ineffective. The mediation by the children is the one significant mediation, the only one which establishes any effective relationships with society outside the kin-group:

Clan

Clan

Children

Enemies and Allies  
(Outsiders)

Allies  
(+ thus outsiders).

The dog is also ineffective in the zoological code. In H2 he is a failed husband. But the pigs and fowls are highly effective, and can mediate not only between man and animals, but between man and the supernatural, as, in sacrifice, they do in reality. In H2 the two homologous mediators bring oppositions into relation on a number of levels. And seed, which is seen as a function of the opposition between Earth and Sun, is brought by the children, prime mediators, who are doubly natural, as children, and as an incestuous pair.

The pigs and fowls in H2 mediate the opposition between Earth and Sun because they are gifts of the Sun father to his daughter on earth. They mediate the opposition between man and animals since they are animals close to man, yet separate from him, since they can be killed instead of him. By being sacrificed they mediate oppositions

between man and the supernatural, and between Life and Death.

Man	Earth	Life	Man
Pigs & Fowls			
Animals	Sun	Death	Supernatural

The episode of the evil spirits who try to eat the children in H2 has not yet been dealt with. It is correlated with the episodes in B1 and M1 in which the structure is reversed and insiders become outsiders, men identify themselves with animals. Instead of men taking on the characteristics of tigers or fish, and killing or eating children, children take on the characteristics of animals to be eaten, and are identified with animals. This is because the children are the marked separating point between natural relations and cultural relations. They become too close to natural relations, and have to be separated from them, as the dog in Bori 2 comes too close to man and has to be separated from him. The children are threatened by the evil spirits of the forest, which embody the most dangerous and hostile characteristics of the forest, to which man sometimes goes, but which is separated from his villages as nature is separated from culture. The evil spirits are combinatory variants of the grandmother of B1 and the brother of M1.

The children are saved by forces of the forest which are either controllable by man, like the dog and the tree, or thought of as like man, though definitely animal, the bear. The interposition of these forces between the hostile part of nature and children is necessary,

because children, as a marked point between culture and nature, have come too close to nature. So a series of different marked points must be interposed which emphasise an interval between children and nature. The dog is a marked point, as close to man, but animal; the bear is more definitely animal, but also metaphorically man; the tree is clearly natural and completely unrelated to man, though it is not dangerous or hostile.

Culture	Children	Nature
Children	Dog, Bear, Tree	Nature

At the end of the myth, the children, who return, with seed, to live with the dog, go between their mother and her kin and their father. The separation of wife from husband is emphasised by their polarisation on a number of levels. The wife is with her group, and out of contact with her husband. Wife-givers are in extreme disjunction from wife-takers. But since children have been born the marital union has been mediated. The wife is High, the husband Low, but one of the children goes between the two spatial poles. The wife is more than cultural, she is supernatural, and the husband animal. As humans the children are in-between. The wife is with the Sun and the husband on Earth, but the children bring seed, which comes from the Sun to the Earth and symbolises their fruitful union:

Wife-givers	High	Superhuman	Sun
Children	Inter-mediate	Human	Seed-bringers
Wife-takers	Low	Animal	Earth

There is one stage missing in the system of mediations in the sociological code. It has been shown that the clan comes into social relations with part of the rest of society through alliance, and that thus allies mediate between the clan and its enemies. But the social relationship with allies is also brought about by mediation. The wife who is given and taken is the mediator:



The animal which brings about a homologous relationship is the mithun. For the Hrusso, as for most mithun-keeping tribes of the area, the mithun has two roles, it is the supreme sacrificial animal, and the essential element in bride-price. The mithun does not play a part in the zoological code, essentially because it is not thought of as food, although this is its sole techno-economic function. It is suggested that the mithun, among the Hrusso and their neighbours, is like cattle among the Nuer. " . . . all cattle are reserved for sacrifice . . . there is a strong feeling, amounting to a moral injunction, that domestic animals - sheep and goats as well as cattle - must not be slaughtered except in sacrifice and, save in very special circumstances, they are never slaughtered for food." (Evans-Pritchard, 1956, p. 263). For the Hrusso, Sinha states that mithuns are killed "only on important social and religious occasions, to celebrate a marriage

or to appease some deity." (1962, p. 36). The Daflas only eat mithun when they die or are sacrificed. (Simoons, p. 49).

This is true for pigs and fowls also, but they are sacrificed more regularly, and the mithun is the prime animal for sacrifice. In the myths the mithun is not part of the zoological code, but either belongs within the sociological code by its own right or mediates between man and the supernatural by being sacrificed, as the pigs and fowls may also do. Within the sociological code the mithun performs the same function as wives, since a gift of a wife is always reciprocated, in theory at least, by the gift of mithun. Hrusso myths constantly return to incest, for humans, but in the myth of the origin of the mithun, the creature refuses to marry incestuously, though her human sisters do.

H4 : Hrusso. Origin of the mithun. (Elwin, 1958, p. 397) Synopsis

Buslu-Ao has 3 sons and 3 daughters. There are no wives or husbands for them, and he decides that they will have to marry one another. But the 3rd sister refuses to sleep with or work for her brother-husband. She changes into a mithun. At first Buslu-Ao ties her up, but then he lets her go off in search of a husband. She meets all domestic and wild animals, but none of them are right. Finally at the place of the rising of the sun, she meets a male mithun. They come together and she has two calves.

Her brother-husband, Chalo-Jijao, falls ill. The priest says he can only be cured by the sacrifice of a mithun. The two elder brothers bring back the sister-mithun. At first they cannot break her skin

with their axes. But Buslu-ao's wife tells her,  
"You were once a human and it would have been im-  
possible to sacrifice you. But now you are a mithun  
and it is your duty to die." They kill her. But  
some of her blood falls in the eyes of her mother.  
Thus eye-diseases came to man.

The sacrifice of the mithun is a mediation between man and the  
Supernatural and Life and Death, as is the sacrifice of pigs and fowls  
in H2. The episodes are homologous:

H2 Pigs and fowls	Mithun H4
identify themselves with children	is a child
But must be distinguished from them	But must be told she is different from children.

The sacrifice in H4 is for a brother, though, not for a child. The  
cosmological code acts as a metaphor for the sociological. A woman  
who must be given out in marriage is also "sacrificed for her brother."  
This would appear to be the view of brothers in a generalised exchange  
system, who do not see themselves receiving a wife as a direct return  
for their sister.

There is a clear opposition in the myth between the human sisters,  
who marry incestuously, and the girl who becomes a mithun, refusing  
incestuous marriage. In reality there is an homology between the re-  
lations which the mithun brings about in society, where it is the gift  
in return for a wife, and the relations which the wife herself brings

about in society. The Hrusso social system entails that their myths are unwilling to recognise these relations in the context of humans. But in a generalised exchange system the point at which it must be recognised that the real effect of exogamy is exchange-relationships is when bride-price is received, directly for a woman. In the myths the point at which incest ceases to be an ideal solution is in the mithun.

A Bugun myth, on the other hand, directly connects the mithun with incest:

B6 : Bugun. The origin of the mithun. (Elwin, 1958, p. 394). Synopsis



The Sun and the Moon are husband and wife.  
Their son and daughter make love and the girl becomes pregnant. The children are terrified of what their parents will do. The child is a mithun.  
They throw him down to earth. He climbs on a rock surrounded by water, and does not dare to cross the water. But a party of Hrussos tempt him across with a pile of green leaves. They catch him and keep him in their house.

Bugun myths are far more cautious about incest. It is usually treated with horror, as here. In only one other myth is there a child of an incestuous union, and it is not mentioned after its birth. This myth includes Hrussos among its characters, and not Buguns. It is likely that it may be a comment on Hrusso social structure.

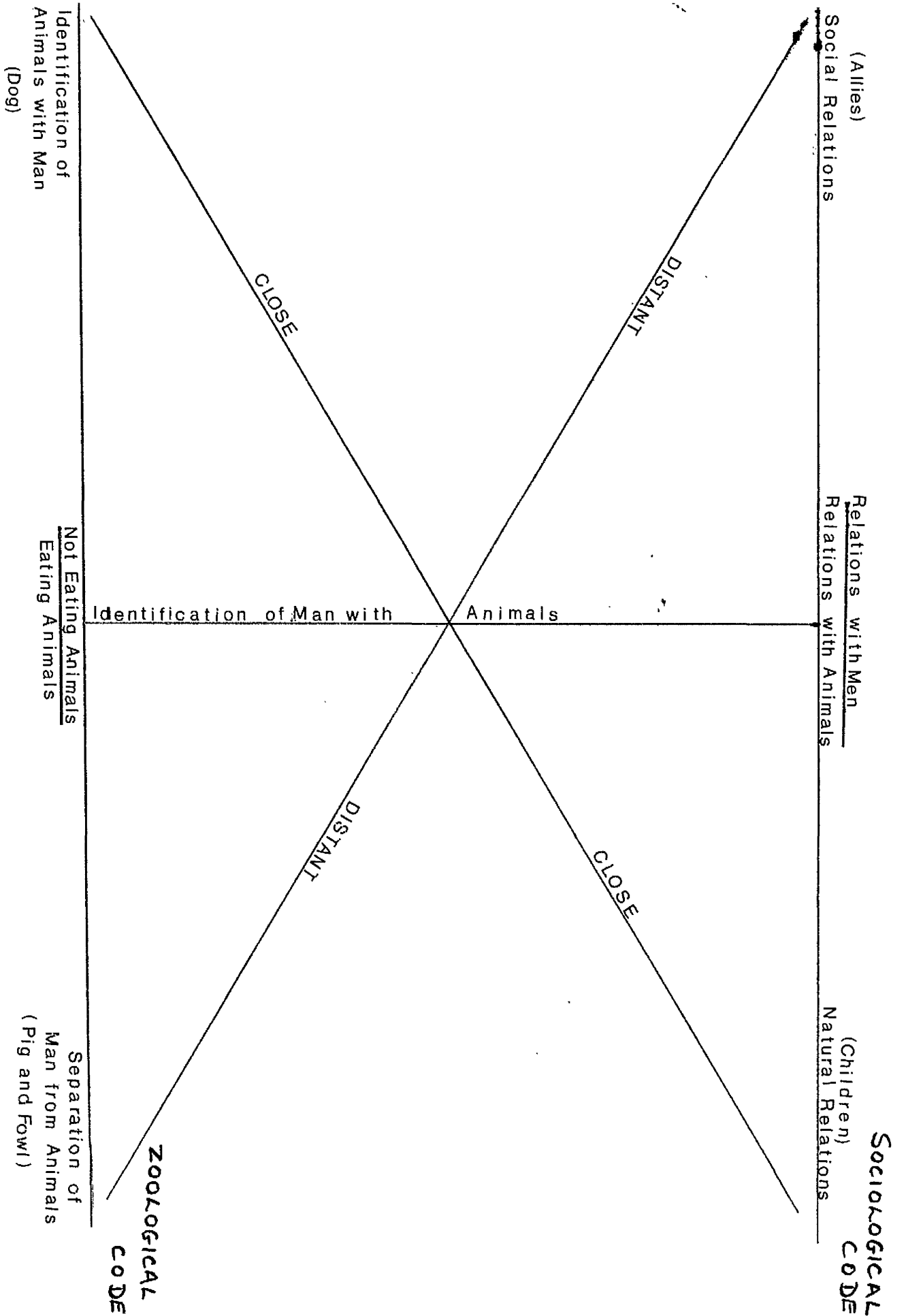
Bugun social structure seems to bring about the problem, not of exogamy, but of the interdependence of exchanging groups.

Restricted exchange may bring groups too close. Incest, as a union between close partners, would not be a solution to this. It is only positively represented in Bugun myths in relation to the mithun. Thus the only point at which the Hrusso recognise exchange in their social system corresponds to the only point where the Bugun recognise incest in their mythical system. And here the Bugun myth inverts the Hrusso myth.

	Hrusso		Bugun
Myth	Reality	Reality	Myth
Human Incest	Human Exogamy	Human Exogamy	Human Non incest
Mithun Non incest	Mithun Exchanged	Women Exchanged	
Mithun Non incest	Mithun Exchanged		Mithun Incest

 = Inversion  
 = Homology





1. The vertical line bisecting the diagram corresponds to the reversal of structure. In the myths at the point where man identifies himself with animals, he eats or kills children, who are in the sociological code of the myths, but are also animals (B1 grandmother, M1 brother-in-law killing dog's children); or children are identified with animals and are nearly eaten by natural "monsters", the evil spirits.

In the two codes, there are not merely binary oppositions between close and distant, but the pattern is reversed half-way along the scale of close  $\longrightarrow$  distant. Eating categories for animals and marriage-categories for men demarcate an area between too close and too distant - Too close // less close / less distant // too distant. This is shown in the diagram, because for each code close and distant come together in the middle, and the direction of the scale is reversed at this point - it goes from close to close / distant, and from close / distant to distant (or vice-versa).

2. The oppositions at the centre of each code (horizontal line) are the product and cause of the oppositions at the poles. The tension between attitudes of affinity with animals and separation from them (Tambiah, 1969) give rise to and are embodied in patterns of behaviour which involve eating or not eating animals. Behaviour patterns between men are similarly linked with the tension between dichotomous attitudes between men, according to whether social or natural relations are stressed. There is here the same ambiguous dialectic between closeness and distance.

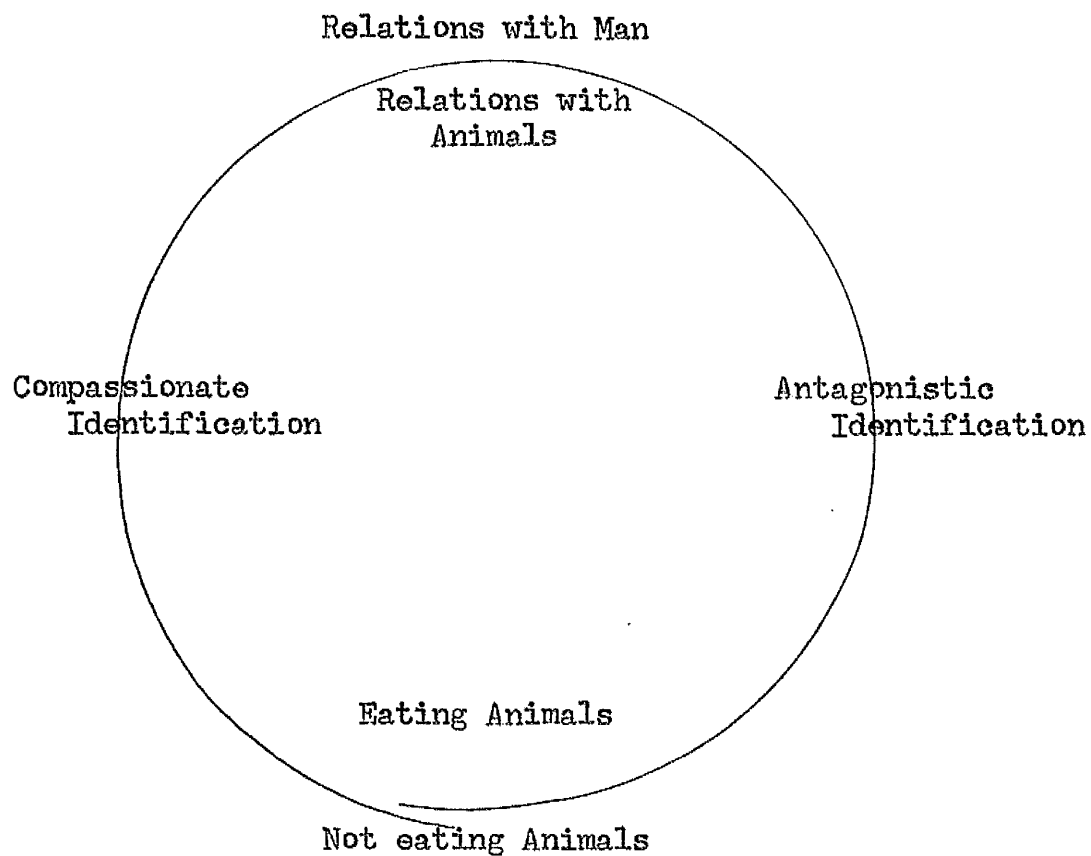
3. The myths show that the dichotomy between the polar terms in each code is both weakest and strongest when man identifies himself with animals. This is the point where the two codes are inter-linked. It therefore illustrates Lévi-Strauss' argument that through the primitive identification of man with animals, he can distinguish himself as he distinguishes them. (1962).

The myths try to resolve the tension between the poles in each code by returning to this point, which is the borderline between nature and culture.

4. The diagram also shows why eating rules will not always be homologous with marriage-rules. The central homology is between behaviour-patterns towards animals and behaviour patterns towards men; the former are the high point of tension between identification of animals with man and the separation of the two, the latter between social relations and natural relations, which create marriage-rules and are present in them.

The diagram is unsatisfactory, above all, because it fails to show that each polar relationship is in fact a continuous oscillation between the poles. Thus in the sociological code relations with allies oscillate between natural and social relations (the snake-husband and Beauty and the Beast myths) as do children also (e.g., the children of B1, in the egg and as fish, the dog's children and the snake's children in M1). In the zoological code there is an oscillation between identification and separation for both dog (Bori 2) and pigs and fowls (H2).

These are oscillations between close and distant. Similarly the identification of man with animals is a cycle. The dialectic between compassionate identification (pitié) and antagonistic identification of man with animals runs through the two pairs of conflicting relationships, and gives rise to a dialectic between them:



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE GIRL NO ONE WANTS

This chapter passes from general considerations of "la pensee symbolique" to the specific points raised by the myths of the first chapter. It is concerned with a creation-myth, which also deals, like myths of the Golden Age and the Garden of Eden, with the coming of culture. It relates to the presence in nature of good and bad phenomena, and to nature's integration of these through its alternation between contrary poles, birth and death, rainfall and dry season. It unites the natural and the social realms both by metonymical and by metaphorical relations. To achieve these relations it correlates the separation of man from nature with the introduction of natural and social order.

It is argued that the coming of culture is synonomous, in many myths, with the coming of periodicity in nature, because it is only with the coming of symbolic thinking that man is able to see nature in terms of oppositions, and thus to see it alternating between opposed states. But the myths also suggest that structuring in terms of oppositions and their integration is a property common to the natural and to the cultural order. Man's mental structuring is, as it were, already given in the periodicity of nature.

The category of periodicity allows the re-examination of the character of the grandmother in Bl. It is suggested that she, who insists on the autonomy of culture, and whose hostility cannot be mediated,

embodies the state of disorder constantly threatened by culture. The different emphasis in Hrusso and Bugun myths on closeness and distance between partners in sexual or marital unions is also examined in the light of this category. It is suggested that the correlation of the balanced periodicity of nature with close unions, in Hrusso myths, and with distant unions, in Bugun myths, is the appearance, in "spectral form" of the opposite tendencies to those inherent in their marriage-systems. The tendencies towards distance or closeness between social groups both threaten the balanced order of marriage-exchange.

#### Part One - The Rhythm of the World

The perpetual conflict between the separation and identification of nature and culture, underlying the myths of the last chapter, may be further refined by the distinction between metonymical and metaphorical relations. Like those myths, B7 deals with the inevitable place of nature in the social realm. But it distinguishes two major states. There is the state in which man is not separated from nature, a state of disorder. This state is seen as impossible to man, both as a cultural and a natural being. Secondly, there is the state where the natural and cultural orders exist and are distinct; they may then be integrated into harmonious order. In this second state nature and culture are united by metonymical and metaphorical relations. In their contiguity each is mediated by the other, and the natural realm is also seen as homologous to the cultural.

B7 : Bugun. The creation of the world. (Elwin, 1958, pp. 9-13).

There was a man called Apuphulwa whose wife's name was Muinini. Apuphulwa was rather elderly, but Minini was still young and she was not happy with him. Every day when she went to the stream to fetch water she would put her bamboo-tubes down on the bank and sit there singing and weeping. In her song she sang -

My husband is old and I am young,

When he dies, what shall I do?

Now in the water of the stream beside which Muinini used to sit and weep there lived a god who heard all that she said and he thought, 'Muinini's husband is old, but I myself am young. If I can marry her, she will live very happily with me.'

One day when Muinini went for water to the stream, she took off her clothes and put them on the bank and went into the water to bathe. The water-god seized her and took her to his house and married her.

When Muinini did not return from the stream Apuphulwa grew impatient and went down to search for her. There on the bank he saw her clothes and the bamboo water-tubes. He called loudly for her, thinking that she might have gone somewhere to catch fish, but when he got no reply he began to look for her desperately.

His search was long and arduous and took him all the way to Lhasa. One day as he was returning he met a very ugly girl, whose name was Nikauma-Modongma. She had only one ear and one eye, no nose and no chin and only one arm and one leg. But when Apuphulwa saw her he thought, 'I am an old man now and there is little chance of my getting a pretty wife. I may as well keep this girl, for she will probably stay with me, as she's hardly likely to get a handsome husband.' So he took her as his wife.

After some time Nikauma-Madongma conceived and in due course gave birth to a son. But the child was a rock and though the parents tried to talk to him, naturally he could not reply.

When the child absolutely refused to speak, his parents were exasperated and decided to punish him. First they piled five loads of wood upon him. Then when this had no effect, they put five loads of bamboo-tubes full of water. When this had no effect, they added five loads of cane. When this had no effect, they put five loads of bamboo. And when this too had no effect, they piled up five loads of grass.

But when nothing they could do made the child speak, Apuphulwa threw him away into the jungle. And then at last the child spoke, 'My parents,' he said, 'you have done well in throwing me into the forest. Now from me rivers will flow and on my body tress and grass will grow. Where I am a rock, your other children will make their houses beneath my shelter. Where I am a river many fish will live in me and, when your children go fishing, I will help them.' This is why, when people go to catch fish, they are able to put up a wall of stones as a dam to hold the water.

Some time afterwards Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to another son, whom they called Takiong. They could not tell what sort of creature he was, for he was always running about and wherever he went he made a noise dudung-dhadang, and when they lit a fire to cook their food he used to blow the flames in all directions. This was a great bother to his parents and one day Apuphulwa kicked the boy and told him to get out. Tokiong took one of his father's daos and a burning log from the fire and went into the sky. As he went he said, 'Now I am going. In the sky there is a great snake who prevents the rain from falling. I will fight with this snake and your children will get plenty of rain.'

This is why when Takiong fights with the snake we hear the thunder and when he threatens the snake with his burning brand we see the lightning.

Some time afterwards Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to a third son, whose name was Kallao. When he was born he went round and round in a circle, making a noise gurur-ghara. When he went round, his father and mother had to go round with him. Unfortunately, this meant that they could not do any work and had no chance to eat. At last in despair Apuphulwa kicked Kallao and told him to get out and the boy went down below the earth.



As he went down he said, 'I am not an easy one to be offended and you have kicked me. As you are angry, so I also will be angry. I will make the earth as if it were not and will destroy your children.' So now, when Kallao goes round like a grindstone, there is an earthquake.

Some time afterwards Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to a fourth son called Chakmao. When he was born everything became dark, so dark that Apuphulwa and Nikauma-Madongma could not see each other. This time they both kicked the child and he, taking a bamboo full of water, went up into the sky. As he went he said, 'My elder brother Takiong and I will send rain upon the earth, and we will help whatever children you may have.'

After some time Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to a fifth child called Hassam. He, like the first boy, did not speak but he kept very close to his mother and wherever he was, a strong whirlwind made it impossible for anyone to talk or do any work. The wind blew so strongly that all Apuphulwa's things were blown about in every direction. They tried to catch hold of him and put him in some place where he would not do any damage, but they could not get their hands on him. So they said to him, 'Since you will not stay in one place, go to the four corners of the world. But at all events go away from here.' As he went Hassam said, 'I am going, but I will give you every kind of help. Wherever there is dirt I will blow it away. When the leaves dry on the trees, I will blow them away so that new leaves can come. I will bring the cold, I will bring the heat and I will bring the rain.'

After some time Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to a snake and when they saw it his parents were afraid and were about to run away. But the snake said, 'Don't be afraid. I will be the king of the water and will live in streams and rivers. When the water runs low, I will call for more.' So saying, he left his parents and went down into the water. This is why when there is scarcity of water the snake goes up into the sky as the rainbow to call for rain.

After some time Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to a poisonous snake. The mother, thinking that this would be a good child, put him to her breast but he bit her and she fell unconscious to the ground. Apuphulwa gave her some medicine and she recovered, but now wherever she went the snake followed her, trying to return into her body by the way he had come out. At last Nikauma-Madongma wearied of this and threw the snake into the forest, telling him to live in a hole in the ground. So the snake went to live in a hole beneath the rock that was the eldest brother.

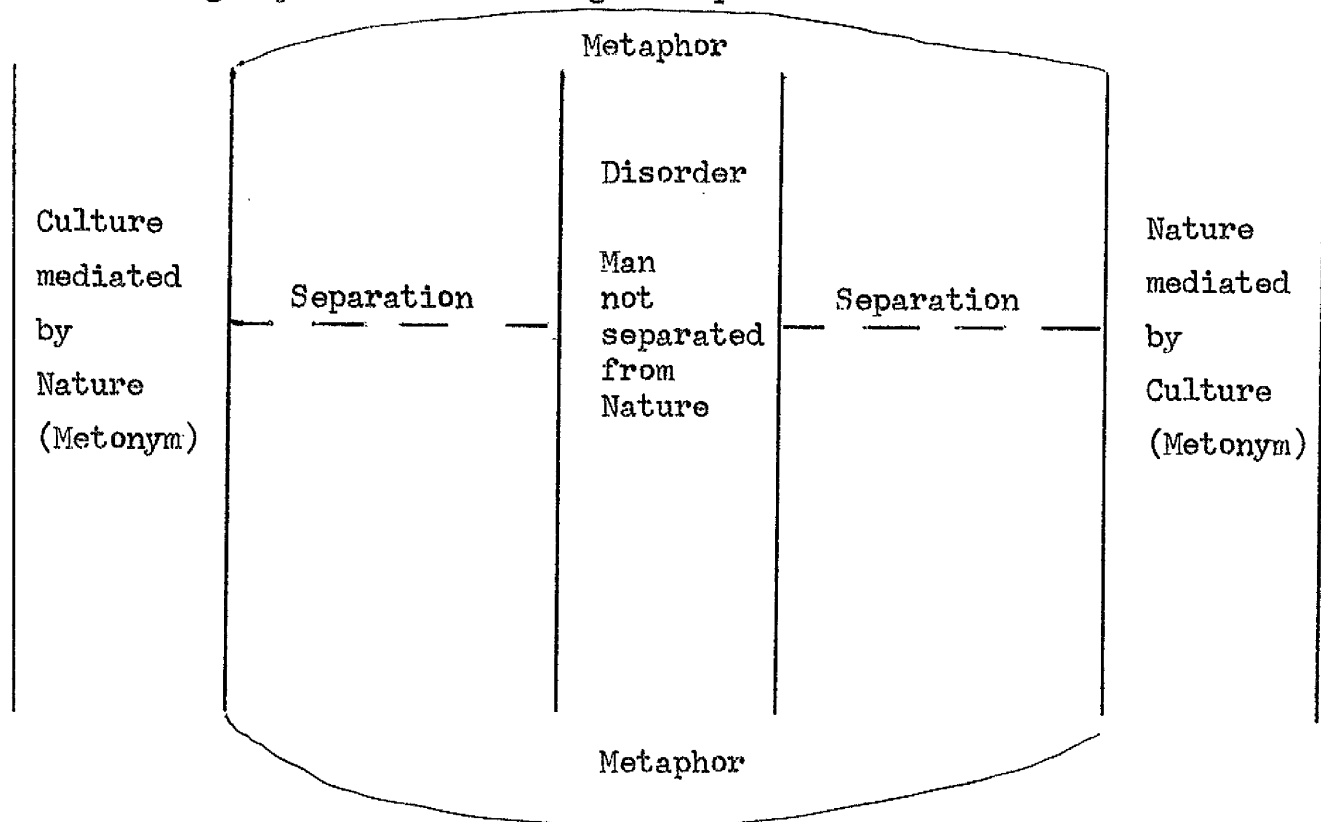
After this Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to thorny trees and bushes and threw them away into the forest. Some time afterwards she gave birth to every kind of poisonous insect and threw them too into the forest.

After this Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to disease-children of every kind, and Apuphulwa and Nikauma-Madongma fell ill. But the hornet came and cured them. When they were quite well again, they said to the disease-children, 'Don't stay here, but go away. You will never find a place where you can all live together.' So the children have ever since wandered through the world making people ill, and have found no place to rest.

Then after a time Nikauma-Madongma gave birth to the child of death, and when he was born both his parents died. The child went weeping to find them, but wherever he went people died when he spoke to them.

The children of Nikauma-Madongma were sometimes good and sometimes bad, because she herself was good on one side of her body and bad on the other.

The state in which man is not separated from nature occurs in the myth when the children, who are to become natural phenomena, are born to the human couple, and before they are separated from their parents. The first and last episodes of the myth are states where nature and culture are distinct but integrated. Examination of these will be deferred until the next part. But the broad structure of the myth must be indicated here. In the first part the social realm of marriage-exchange is seen as a balanced order, in which natural relations are present metonymically. In the second part the natural world is also balanced, and contains within it elements of culture. These elements are the mediating instruments used to bring the rain and the language in which the children speak to their parents, and through which, in the end, death comes to humanity. Between these two states, of culture mediated by nature and nature mediated by culture, there is a homology. Each can signify the other through metaphor.



The central state may be made clear by examining the way in which man sees his relationship to natural periodicity. Nature is always controlled by man to some extent, and to some extent holds him at its mercy. But although it cannot be controlled entirely, it may be seen as ordering itself, so long as it continues its repetitive alternations. Man's life consists of social acts and physiological processes, in all of which he comes into contact with nature (even if it is only his own body) and which, since they are also repetitive, resemble the periodicity of nature. Man's own acts and processes must therefore be controlled, lest they endanger nature's periodicity, either metonymically, by their contact with it, or metaphorically, by their resemblance to it.

Levi-Strauss (1968, pp. 420-422) suggests this is one of the functions of all mediating instruments and rules of conduct. They are used to assign a reasonable duration to all man's acts and processes, and to assign to all our exchanges with the world a rhythm which is sobered, quieted and domesticated. This includes the head-scratchers and drinking-tubes used by girls at puberty in many pre-literate societies, and also the cutlery and packages insisted on in Western society. Above all it includes rules of conduct and good manners. Good manners insist that everything should be accomplished, but not too precipitately.

Children who must be socialised must be taught to use the instruments and to obey the rules, in order that the periodicity of nature may be protected. In B7 this is emphasised, for the children are themselves the phenomena of nature which must retain a regular rhythm.

In the myth the preservation of the natural rhythm by man's use of mediating instruments and conduct is extended. For the natural phenomena themselves are equipped with fire or a bamboo-tube, or they communicate in language, which is cultural conduct par excellence.

Before this stage, however, the regular periodicity of both nature and culture is impossible. As Lévi-Strauss shows (ibid.) the threat to periodicity is always a double one. On the one hand there is the threat of the rhythm slowing down, which is evoked by myths of the continuous day or night. On the other hand, the rhythm may grow too rapid, which comes to the same thing, for an alternating ~~imp~~ulse becomes indistinguishable from a continuous one, if the period between alternations is shortened. The various modes of conduct of the natural children, before they are separated from their human parents, evoke both these threats. Moreover, they make culture, represented by language, cooking, work and the incest-prohibition, impossible; they also threaten man's natural existence, for he cannot eat, and there is no alternation in the universe. This may be set out in a table:

Child	Code	Conduct	Effect on Culture	Effect on Nature
Rock	Acoustic	Silence	No language	No alternation between noise and silence
Taklong	Acoustic	Confused noise	No language	No alternation between noise and silence
Kallao	Acoustic	Confused noise	No language	No alternation between noise and silence
Rock	Movement	Immobility		No growth of plants
Taklong	Movement	Constant movement	No cooking	No alternation between stillness and movement
Kallao	Movement	Constant movement	No work	No alternation between stillness and movement
Hassam	Movement	Constant movement	No language, no work	No alternation between stillness and movement
Chakmao	Visual	Darkness		No alternation between light and dark
Hassam	Spatial	Closeness		No intervals between objects.
2nd Snake	Spatial	Closeness	No incest-prohibition	Impotence

Three points must be made. Firstly, the particular conducts correspond to the slowing-down of the natural rhythm, or to its speeding-up. Thus silence, darkness and immobility are states where it has slowed down; confused noise, constant movement and closeness, states where it has become too rapid. Secondly, there is a clear parallel between the shortening of the intervals of time between alternating states, and the shortening of the spatial intervals between objects. Thus closeness can be correlated with rapid alternation. Thirdly, the two states amount to the same thing. This is shown in Hassam, the wind, who both keeps too close to his mother and creates a perpetual whirlwind. It is also shown by the second snake. By trying to return by the way by which he came out, he threatens to block his mother's womb. Thus she would become impotent, and the rhythm of procreation would come to a standstill. The return to the womb also connotes mother-child incest. This threatens to speed up the rhythm of procreation, for it entails the use of the same womb for procreation of and by the child.

This part of the myth evokes the lack of either the natural or the cultural order. In this state all is confusion or standstill, meaningless noise or silence. It is only through the separation of the children that nature can begin on its regular periodicity, that it may be mediated by culture, and become homologous to it.

## Part Two - Poetic Justice

The separation of the children enables them to become the phenomena of nature, which are, or should be, governed by regular periodicity. The myth, as a whole, moves from sexual potency and birth to death. The rhythm of birth and death is the part of natural periodicity which affects man most directly, and it signifies the overall integration by nature of the diversity of phenomena, through its repeated alternation between opposed states.

Underlying the diversity of the natural phenomena which the first ten children become there is a major opposition specified by the myth itself, between good and bad:

Good: Rock, Thunder and Lightning, Rain, Wind, First Snake

Bad: Earthquake, Second Snake, Thorny Trees, Insects, Diseases.

It is impossible, without further knowledge of Bugun classification, to subdivide them further. The opposition between the good snake and the bad snake marks these as a complementary pair. It seems probable that other complementary pairs are also involved.

The major categories can be made more precise, however. All the good children are connected with the helpful side of natural alternation, especially as it effects fertility and the provision of water. Rivers flow from the rock, and plants grow on him. Takiong, the thunder and lightning, defeats the snake who holds back the rain. Chakmao brings the rain. Hassam, the wind, blows away old leaves so that new leaves can come. He is the supreme principle of alternation, for he brings



the seasons, on which fertility depends. The good snake, who mediates between earthly and heavenly water, brings the rain when the rivers are low.

Whereas the good children are on the side of regular periodicity, the bad children are all connected with the irregularity of nature. They become those phenomena which produce unpredictable natural accidents or calamities, from the mild danger of thorny trees to the overwhelming disaster of earthquakes and epidemics.

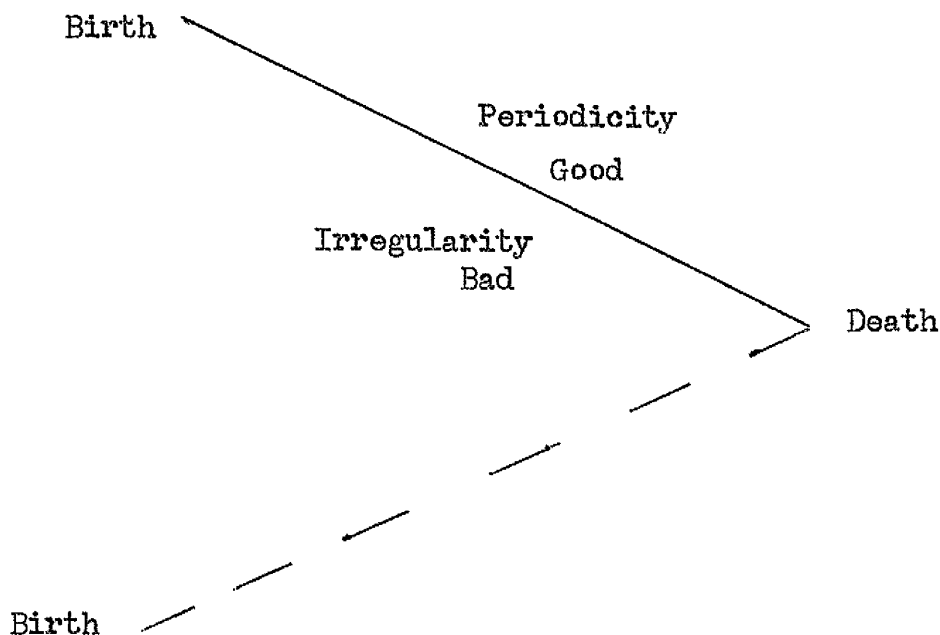
Good children : Bad children : : Regular periodicity : Irregularity

The child of death is between these two poles. Death may be thought of as bad, but it is always an anticipated event, and must be accepted. It may be regular, occurring more or less when expected; or it may be irregular, occurring prematurely. It is opposed to both the major classes: to the bad phenomena because it is inevitable, whereas they are unpredictable; to the good because death is the opposite pole to the fertility which they represent. It is, however, specifically a question of human death. Thus it is opposed to human birth, which means it is opposed to all the children, including itself, and to the couple who procreated and bore them.

The myth is concerned with the coming of sexual fertility and with its opposition to human death. The concern with sexual procreation can be amplified by reference to a variant (B8). In this myth the

first man and woman have the same names as the first couple in B7, Apuphulwa and Muinini. At first they do not live together, but the great Lord creates a male-spirit and a female-spirit, to fill them with desire, because, as he says, "Unless these two come together, how will the race of men be born?" (Elwin, 1958, p. 103). The parallelism of sexual and plant fertility in B1 reinforces the correlation here.

The child of death completes the process begun by Nikauma- Madongma. The periodical duration of human life is complete, and alternation between the poles of birth and death may be repeated endlessly. The whole diversity of the natural world is crystallised into two simple oppositions, between good and bad, and between periodicity and irregularity. The process from death to birth, which epitomises alternation as a good and bad process, mediates these oppositions. It is implied that, because nature is fundamentally periodical, it compensates for its irregularities; the world cannot be controlled by man, but it orders itself, and thus presents no undue threat.



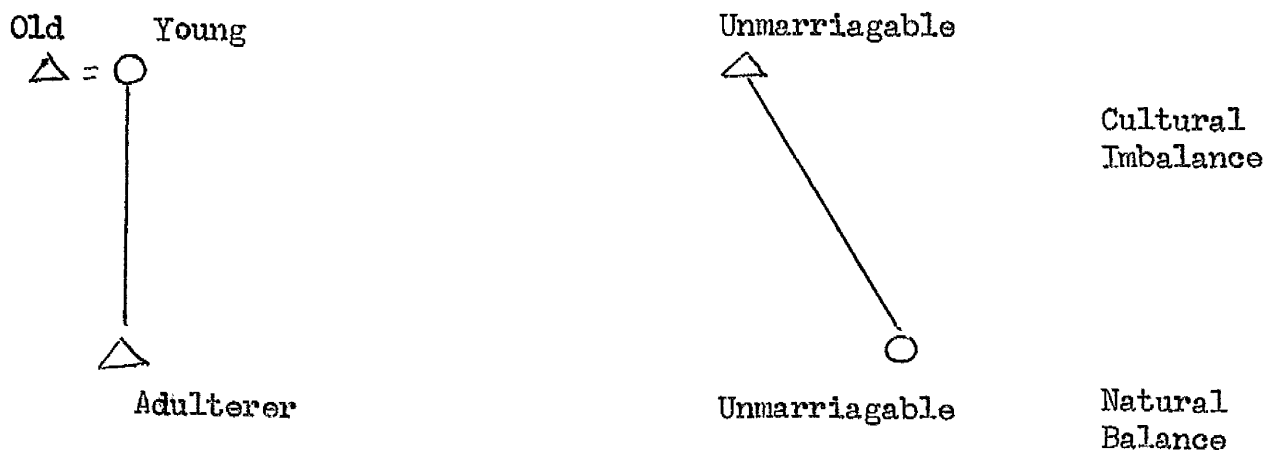
Seen in this way, the natural world is homologous to culture. For integration by opposition is precisely the function of the three essential mechanisms of culture - the exchange of women, goods and services and messages.

The natural world is also mediated by culture. It may be united to the realm of culture by metaphor, but culture is always in metonymical relation with nature. Nature must therefore also contain parts of culture within it. The use of cultural implements and conduct in the natural world thus has a triple function. It regulates the periodicity of nature in the same way as man regulates his own activities, in order to preserve the rhythm of nature. It unites nature and culture, once they have been distinguished, by bringing them into contiguity. Finally it enables the natural realm to be more completely homologous to the cultural. It is emphasised that nature's complete periodicity depends on cultural mediation; for the child of death, who finalises the process from birth to death, brings death by language.

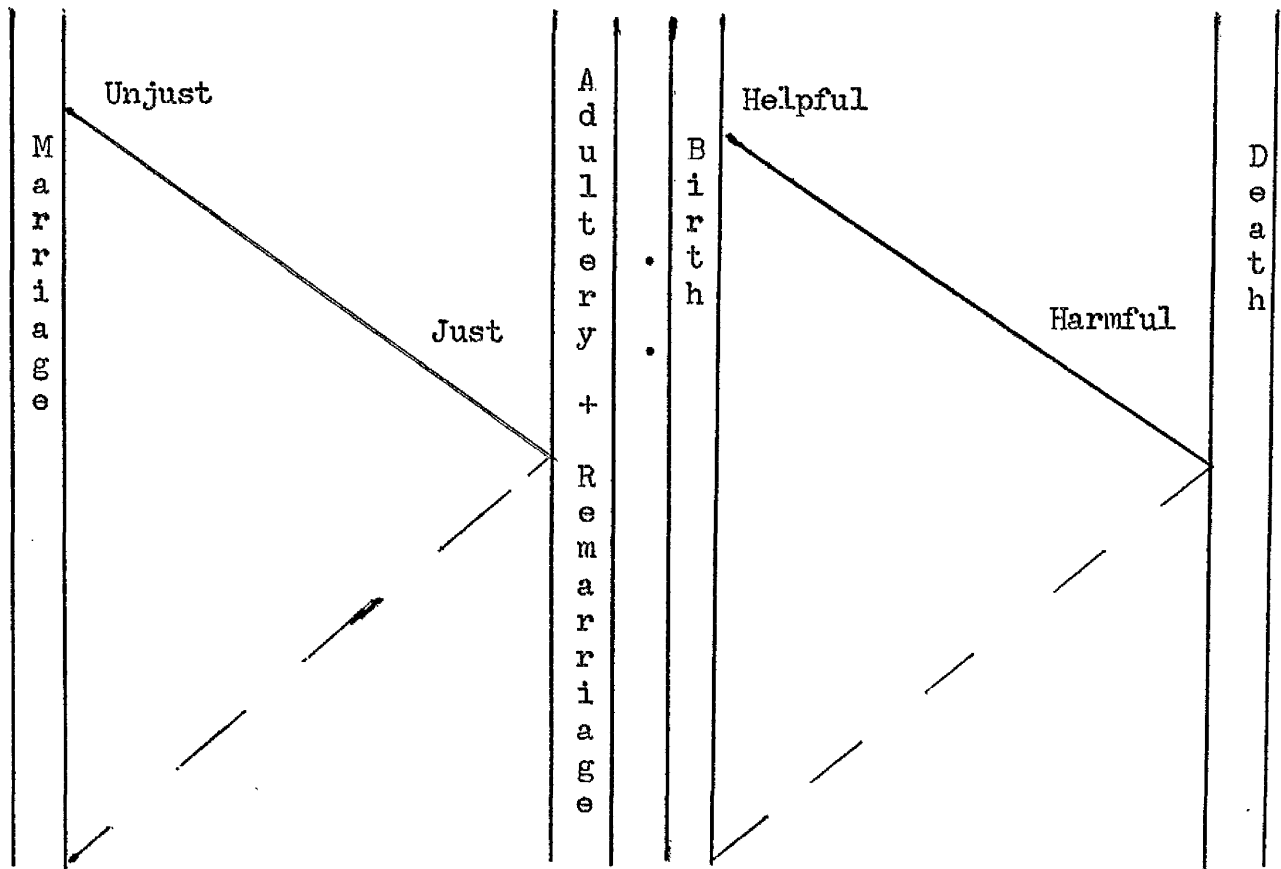
The culturally mediated nature in the second part of B7 corresponds to the social situations, as yet not mentioned, in the first part. In the second part nature is seen as ordered; it integrates its irregularities into a total balance. Culture helps to complete this balance. The first part deals with marriage, a part of society in which culture integrates through opposition, and nature is always present. In the particular unions dealt with by B7 the social equilibrium, prejudiced by culture, is made more perfect through the intervention of nature.

The first union, the marriage of an old man to a young wife, is one of natural imbalance, which might well incur disapproval in any society. (It was a prime target for the "Charivaria" in European tradition - Van Gennep. t.l. vol. II, pp. 614-620). In a system of restricted exchange, however, especially one such as the Bugun, where the mother's brother appears to be a possible, if not preferred, husband for his sister's daughter, such marriages might well be socially desirable. In the myth, the balance is re-established by a union outside marriage. The adultery is a purely sexual, and thus natural, union, but the parties are better matched.

The old man is left without a wife. Society would generally place him outside the range of possible marriage-partners, for he is old and has already been married. The cultural system would leave him without a wife, and there would be another natural imbalance. The balance is re-established again by nature, for he finds a wife who would be naturally outside the range of marriage partners. She is a girl whom no one else would want to marry. The mediation of nature establishes a more perfect equilibrium in the social periodicity of marriage exchange:



The two parts of the myth are strictly homologous. In the first part, nature, related to culture metonymically, establishes a balanced and regular periodicity in a cultural realm. In the second part culture, related to nature metonymically, establishes a balanced and regular periodicity in the natural realm. The myth presents two perfect situations which are not present in reality, where marriage-exchange is not balanced, nor nature entirely regular. And in the reality of exchange, nature tends to be in conflict with culture. Essentially, the myth deals with the problem of suffering, and brings "poetic justice" where there is no real justice.



The correlation of inhumanity in social life with the disasters of nature is found more strongly, but in similar form, in a myth of the Nocte, a tribe on the Eastern side of NEFA. The myth tells how the souls of illegitimate children go to a strange half-world of their own, below the earth. From time to time they join hands and dance. It is this dance that shakes the world. The story is put in perspective by Elwin's comment that the Nocte, at least in the past, have rarely allowed such children to be born, or if born, to live for long. (Elwin, 1958, p. 86.).

### Part Three - The Golden Age

This analysis of B7, by itself, is inadequate. It may be strengthened by placing the myth in the context of a wider group of myths which are distributed throughout the world, and are all transformations within a group. Like B7, these myths are all concerned with the simultaneous origin of culture and of the natural world as it is seen by man. All are attempts to overcome the opposition between nature and culture by showing them to be homologous. These are all myths of the Golden Age, of a state, usually situated in past or future time, in which man is immortal, and his life is always peaceful and happy. The myths are very diverse, and stress different aspects.

The most numerous are myths which stress the simultaneity of the origin of death and sexual potency. Two examples will suffice. In a

myth of the Nupe of Nigeria (Beier, p. 58), God creates tortoises, men and stones. None can have children, but when they grow old, they do not die, but become young again. The tortoise goes to God and asks him for children. God tells him that the living must die when they have had children. The tortoise says: "Let me see my children and then die." God grants his wishes. Man sees the tortoise's children; and goes to God with the same request. It is granted on the same terms. Only stones did not want children, and so they never die. In a myth of the Tenetehara of Brazil (Lévi-Strauss, 1964, p. 163), the first man possesses a penis always in erection. The first woman shows him how to make it soft through intercourse. When the demiurge sees this he tells man: "From now on you will have a soft penis, you will make children, and then you will die. Your child will grow up, he will also make children, and die in his turn."

The myths do not concern just the origin of short life, but also the periodicity of birth and death. The opposition between periodicity and non-periodicity becomes a spatial opposition between continuity and discontinuity in another Tenetehara myth. A snake goes up into the sky, and breaks his bow and arrows into minute fragments, which become the stars. Men and animals do not see the spectacle, and must die when they grow old. But the arachnids witness it, and are thus able to rejuvenate themselves by changing their skins. (Lévi-Strauss, *ibid.*, p. 164.)

The coming of life and death is often specifically correlated with the coming of other natural alternations. Myths of the long day or the long night, which exist in most cultures, are often concerned also with the coming of life and death. In a myth of the Rengma Naga (Mills, 1937, p. 271), night and day were the same in the beginning, and the living and the dead both lived together on earth. But God divided time into day and night, and removed the dead to another world. Here the separation of night and day in time is correlated with the separation of the living and the dead, but the latter is placed on a spatial axis.

A sub-group of myths, to which B7 belongs, directly correlates the coming of natural alternation with the coming of culture. The Genesis story of the Garden of Eden connects the coming of culture, in the necessity to wear clothes and to work, with the coming of death and sexual reproduction. Among the Nuer these are myths of a state in which man does not suffer from hunger, either his stomach lives separately from him, or he does not need to work because a single grain of millet suffices him for food. The sexual organs are also separate from men and women, or man does not know how to beget, or woman how to bear. Man has no knowledge of fire or spear. But the stomach enters into man, and he is always hungry; he learns to pound millet and must always work. He begins to mate. Fire comes to him and knowledge of the spear, and he begins to kill. (Evans-Pritchard, 1956, pp. 268-9).



For an Andaman myth (Lévi-Strauss, 1969, p. 458) the Golden Age is in the future: "The future life will be but a repetition of the present; but all will then remain in the prime of life, sickness and death will be unknown, and there will be no more marrying or giving in marriage."

In these myths the coming of death and potency, which is the point where the alternation of nature applies to man, accompanies the origin of culture, in its form of the exchange of women, the exchange of services or, in B7, the exchange of words. It is with the coming of symbolic thinking, which is also the transition from nature to culture, that man is able to conceptualise the natural world as a state of regular periodicity and order. The myths deal with this transition, which implies the coming of man's perception of order in nature. But they do not deal with this alone. For they also bring about the order of nature itself. According to the myths, it is the coming of order in nature, and not the coming of man's perception of nature as ordered, which corresponds, in time and space, to the coming of culture and symbolic thinking. The myths make all orders part of the same order. The order of man's thinking, which allows him to conceptualise nature as ordered, and to order his culture, is an inseparable part of the order of nature itself.

It is argued that the myths admit the natural foundation underlying man's thinking, which is an admission which could not be made outside the realm of myth. For to show that the mind's processes, which govern culture, are already present in nature itself, and subject to the same laws, denies the autonomy of culture.

The ordered periodicity of nature and the cultural order are both ambiguous. They involve harm to man, by death or by the injustice of social practices, but their very order is essential to man's existence. Myths evoke two states in which order is eliminated; one is an ideal state, and the other a threatening state. The Golden Age is an ideal state of disorder, in which death and exchange, which implies work and the uncertainty of marriage-rules, are eliminated. The states where the rhythm of nature is too slow or too rapid, evoked by myths of the long day and the long night, and by B7, which are states of impotence and confusion, are all undesirable states, for the order of nature does not exist and cultural order is impossible also. The two states are opposed, as desirable and undesirable. But they are complementary since in both the elimination of the natural order is always accompanied by the elimination of the cultural. Myths cannot conceive of one without the other, for the cultural order has its foundations in the order of nature.

This may be put in another way. The myths see that nature passes from a state of non-periodicity, or continuity, to one of periodicity, or discontinuity. This second state, which is nature as it is, is correlated with man's ability to conceptualise nature, and to use it to signify. Nature has always signified, but man has only been able to conceptualise it as such since the coming of symbolic thinking. The myths cannot conceive of a state in which man could not see nature as

signifying, except by conceiving of that state as one in which nature itself did not signify. Thus mythological states are invented in which nature was continuous, and thus, in fact, incapable of signifying. The coming of man's ability to conceptualise is then contemporaneous with a discontinuity, and periodicity, in nature.

Nature which is capable of signifying can be used as a metaphor for man's social life. It is through metaphor that natural species, which have also passed from continuous to discontinuous, can signify man's social order in the "totemic" myths of the Ojibwa and the Tikopia (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 27, 36). Relations of metaphor are fundamental to all systems of signification, as to language. As Rousseau said, the first speech was all in poetry.

In B7 the passage from nature as continuous and disordered to nature as ordered and capable of signifying is made contemporaneous with the coming of language, man's primary means of signification. The continuous state is marked by acoustic conduct which is not language, the periodical state by linguistic conduct; for the children, when separated, begin to speak. The discontinuous state is also one in which oppositions appear in nature. Oppositions are essential to signification, for all sign-systems are systems of differences. In Genesis, culture, death and sexual potency come with the eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In B7 the children of Nikauma-Madongma are either good or bad, for she is good on one side and bad on the other.

Although B7 is, in one sense, a hymn to order in nature and in culture, it reveals also the regret, seen in the Golden Age myths, for the harmful consequences of order. For order in nature implies death for man, and the cultural order implies man's separation from nature. That the myth sees this separation as anti-human is clear from the metaphor by which it represents it, the rejection of children by their parents. The child of death, who is most completely separated from his parents, represents order in both nature and culture, for he brings death to the world by language. But men do not regard death as a symbol of order, it is seen rather as a manifestation of a disordered and anti-human nature. At the end of the myth language, the cultural and ordered sound, which brings death, is opposed to the weeping of the child of death, a confused sound which is more disordered but is also more human.

#### Part Four - Life and Death

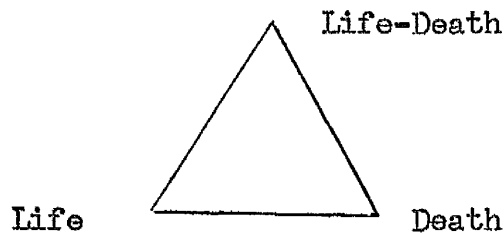
The analysis of the myths of the Golden Age indicates that the ability of man to integrate through opposition, which is the fundamental characteristic of symbolic thinking, determines and is determined by his conceptualisation of nature and the cosmos. Integration through opposition is found in the external world in the category of periodicity, which involves alternation between opposed states. The category is regarded as sacred, and its regularity is protected through

assiduous attention to the regularity of man's own periodical processes and actions. The alternation between life and death is the most vital part of man's and nature's periodicity. Two Hrusso myths, which are also concerned with the category of periodicity, deal with the mediation between Life and Death.

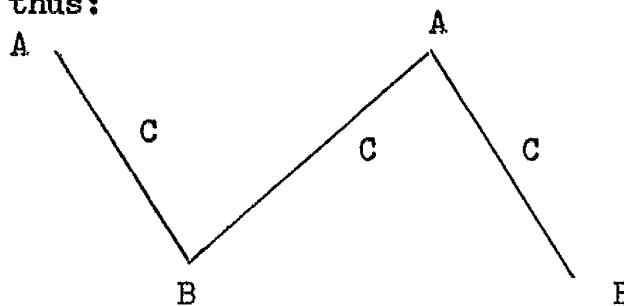
It is first essential to clarify the notion of Life-Death mediators. It is difficult to see why they should be necessary since Death is a part of Life, as Life is of Death. Leach states (1964) that it is the fundamental role of religion to separate Life and Death. Thus it is essential to mediate them. While this is clearly true, it is not complete. The separation is part of language, which assigns separate terms to them; and if their separation is common to language and to religion, this suggests that their separation is part of symbolic thinking itself. It is not only emotionally satisfactory to regard them as separate, but logically essential. Nature integrates by alternation, and it is therefore essential that the poles between which nature alternates be seen as separate.

Leach also points out that alternation implies two things, firstly separate poles and secondly, something to alternate between them (1966, p. 129). It is only by adopting this formulation that it is possible to make sense of Life - Death mediations. The mediator, which can be seen as passing between the poles, may have the function of separating them and uniting them at the same time. With the linguistic categories of Life and Death, there are always three terms available to form a

system. These are separate Life, separate Death, and a combined term, Life - Death, which is available because each term implies the other:



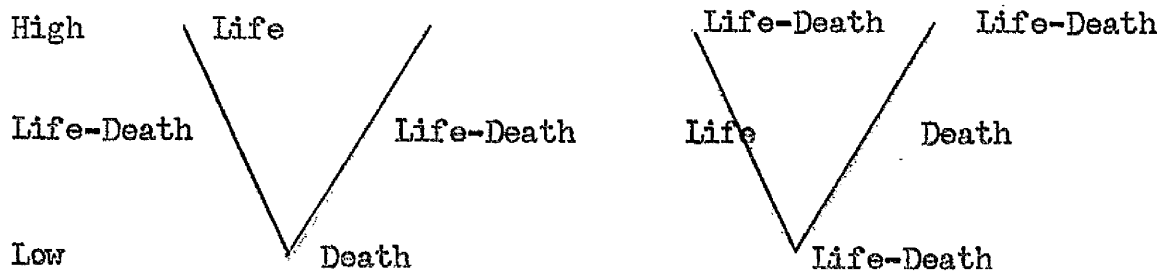
Alternation, thought of as a movement between two poles, can be diagrammed thus:



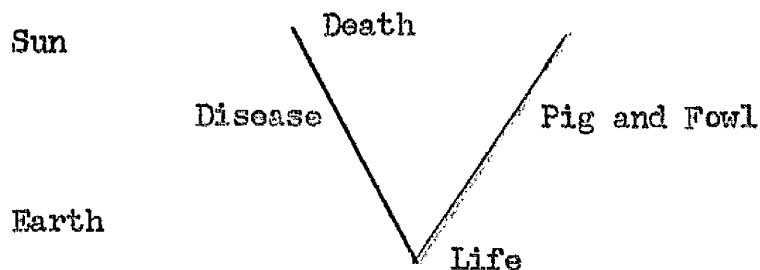
where C is the element uniting and separating the poles. Thus Life and Death can represent the polar states, and Life - Death the intermediary. But once continuity has been established between the poles by the intermediary element, the original separation of the two is lost. Each pole becomes Life - Death, and since the intermediary term is also Life - Death, there are no poles and no mediator.

The myths do not stop at this stage, however. For the separate poles of Life and Death may be linked to other poles, which are really separate, like High Low or Land Water, and thus be kept separate although their association with separate Life or separate Death is lost. But since the poles are ambivalent in terms of Life and Death, the mediator must change its character. That is to say, it must cease to be

Life - Death, or it would be like the poles, and must become either separate Life or separate Death. Thus:

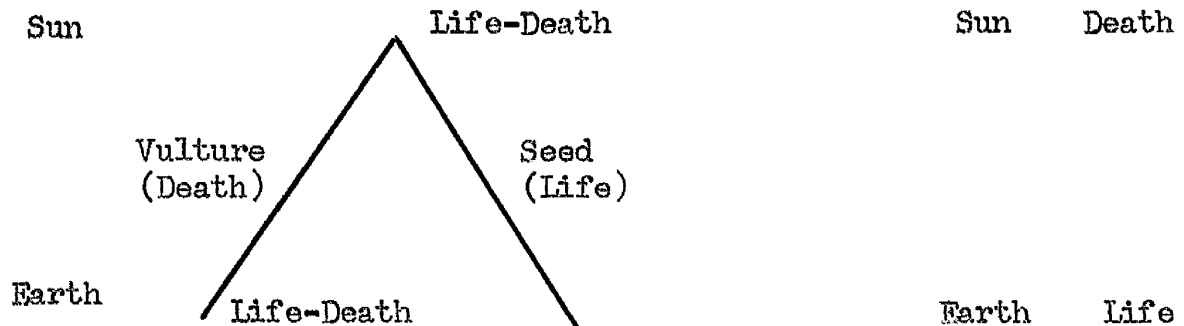


This is the logic of H2. The initial separation between Sun and Earth is a real separation, and can hold the poles apart. The Sun is connected with Death in Hrusso belief, and this is so in the myth, for the vulture carries the blood of the dead to the house of the Sun. At the beginning of the myth the children become ill, and pigs and fowls have to be sacrificed for their recovery. Thus two ambivalent terms pass between the poles - disease, which brings death to the living, and sacrificed animals, who bring life through being killed.



At this point the disposition of meaning between the poles and the mediator is reversed; the poles have both become Life - Death, and only elements representing, in some way, complete Death or complete Life, can pass between them. The vulture, at the end of the myth, carries the girl-child to the Sun, and she returns with seed. The vulture is metaphorically Death, since he lives on dead flesh and carries the

blood of the dead to the Sun. Seed is metaphorically Life, for it enables men to live without killing. Thus Death moves from Earth to Sun, and Life back again. The result of these movements is to re-establish the polar opposition with which the myth began:



H5 : Hrusso. The coming of death. (Elwin, 1958, pp. 288-290).

At the beginning there were two Suns who were man and wife and two Moons who were also man and wife. The heat of these four was so great that on earth the grass and trees withered away and men and animals died.

But then the Sun's wife and the Moon's husband began to make love to one another secretly. For this they used to come down to earth and when they met there everything caught fire around them and that is why today the earth is sometimes red and sometimes yellow; when we see this we know that the Sun and Moon made love to one another there.

When the Sun and Moon came to the earth, men and animals ran away and hid for fear of being burnt to death. They gathered together in a secret place and said, 'Who can destroy these evil-doers?' But none of them was strong enough to kill a Sun and Moon, so they went to search for someone who could.

Now there were two mighty brothers, Chou-Siphu and Khrao-Libji. When they saw the men and animals going through the forest, they stopped them and said, 'Where are you all going?' Men and animals told the two brothers what had happened and the unhappy state in which they were living. Hearing this the two brothers said, 'We will certainly kill these evil-doers. You all hide somewhere and we will wait for them to come here and then we'll kill them.'



Men and animals hid and after a little while the Sun's wife and the Moon's husband came to earth, and Chou-Siphu and Khrao-Libji shot at them with their bows. Khrao-Libji's arrow pierced the Sun's wife and she died there on the ground; Chou-Siphu's arrow struck the Moon's husband, but did not kill him immediately and he rose into the air and fled away with the arrow in his body to his wife in the sky and when he reached her he died in her arms. When his wife saw him pierced by the arrow she wept bitterly.

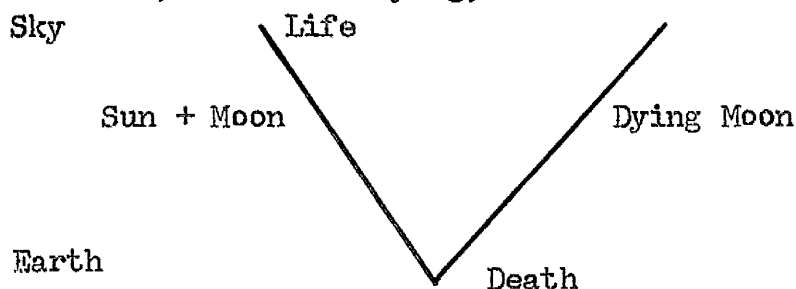
The Sun said, 'My wife has died down on earth, but the husband of my sister the Moon has died here. If now she gives his body to men and animals they too will die.' So he went to warn men and animals. 'When my sister the Moon calls to you,' he said, 'make no reply, but when I call you may reply.' He returned to his place and darkness fell.

With the coming of night the Moon came out of her house with her husband in her arms and weeping bitterly. Everyone was asleep except the barking-deer and the peacock in the forest. When these two heard the weeping of the Moon they cried, 'What is the matter?' When she heard them the Moon let the body of her husband fall to the earth and cried, 'As you killed my husband so may you all - men, animals and birds - die too.' This is how death came to the world.

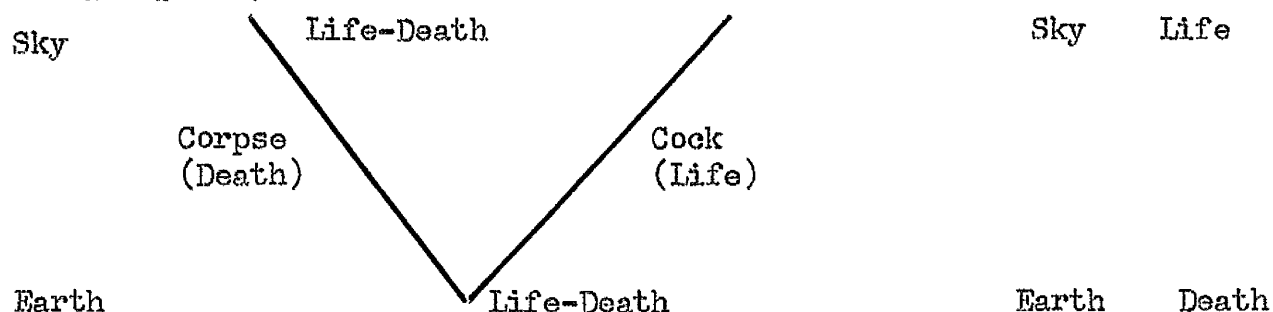
But when the cock heard what had happened he roused the Sun, calling to him to come and help. The Sun came out of his house and saw that men and animals were weeping. He said, 'There is nothing I can do now. I warned you not to answer if the Moon cried to you. Now it is too late and you all must die.'

The myth clearly inverts H2, since in the beginning the sky is all life, signified by too many planets, and earth is all death. It may also invert Hrusso belief, which identifies the Sun with death. This is enhanced by the fact that the Hrusso believe in reincarnation (Sinha, 1962, p. 98), which the coming of seed at the end of H2 could symbolise, whereas H5 ends with complete death for men.

Structurally the first parts are homologous. The two planets pass from sky to earth. They are shot, and the Moon's husband returns dying, to the sky. The couple who come to earth represent Life - Death, for they bring death, but they come for sex, which represents life. Similarly the Moon's husband who returns to the sky is between Life and Death, for he is dying, but still alive:



At this stage the poles become ambivalent. The barking-deer and the peacock emphasise this for the Earth, for they are animals which do not kill to eat, but are killed by men and animals. At this stage the Moon throws her husband's body down to Earth. The cock goes to the Sun to ask for help, but the Sun cannot help. The corpse, which is dead already and brings death, is a strengthened form of death, and can thus represent complete death. The cock, which is alive and whose role is to bring the day, can represent complete life. Thus by Death passing from sky to earth, and Life passing from earth to sky, the ambivalence of the poles is eliminated, and sky becomes all Life, Earth all Death.



This analysis makes it clear that mediators are very difficult to find, for the reason that life and death are mutually implied. Thus any living being could be a mediator charged with the meaning of Life and Death. And it is almost impossible to find mediators which represent all one state or all the other. The category of immortals tends to make for unsatisfactory mediators, for immortals are, by definition, separate from men. But the opposite category is impossible, for if non-living beings are chosen, e.g., rocks, they will not be identifiable with death, for they have never lived. (or they may be thought of as living, but in this case they become immortal.) It is for this reason that the peculiar combination of a corpse which brings death is chosen, but even this is not without ambivalence. It seems to be a solution used by other myths in this part of NEFA, however. In a Dhammai myth the Sun sends death to men by throwing the corpse of one of her children to earth. It becomes a deer-carcass, and men, who eat it, begin to die (Elwin, 1956, p. 284). In a Bori myth a man is carrying a dead pig on his back, tied with a creeper. The creeper breaks; the pig falls, its tusk pierces the man's foot, and he dies (ibid., p. 283). H5 also contains a theme which correlates with B7, for it repeats the opposition between weeping and language. The Moon weeps, and animals on earth hear her and call back.

## Part Five - World Out of Order

In B7 the order of nature is seen as homologous to man's cultural ordering of society, and a harmonious balance is achieved where nature and culture are in their correct metonymical relation. This can be contrasted with B1, where culture, signified by the grandmother, is hostile towards the uncontrollable part of nature present in marriage, seeing it as a snake, invasive and dangerous. But nature, in the form of the fertilising waters, has an ordered rhythm in B1, as B7. Two of the snakes in B7 are concerned with the alternation of the water: the great snake in the sky, who holds back the water, but is forced to relinquish it, and the rainbow-snake, who periodically goes to the sky to call for water. These snakes can be correlated with the two characters in B1 who take away and bring back water: the snake and the fish.

B1 Snake

B7 Great Snake

Take away water, but relinquish it.

B1 Fish

B7 Rainbow Snake

Bring water, and live in water.

The poisonous snake in B7 does not correspond to any natural character in B1, though it corresponds to the evil snake of S1. The extreme hostility of nature represented by the poisonous snake in B7 is replaced, in B1, by the extreme hostility of culture, represented by the grandmother.

B1 Grand mother  
Hostile  
Extreme culture  
Cannibal

B7 Poisonous Snake  
Hostile  
Extreme nature  
Incestuous

The transformation from incest to cannibalism is one from the sexual to the alimentary code. They are "the most exaggerated forms of sexual union and of the consumption of food." (Lévi-Strauss, 1966<sup>(2)</sup>, p. 106. An example is given of a language which uses the same word for both). It is with the second transformation, from nature to culture, that this part of the chapter is concerned.

There is another clear link between B7 and B1, since both contain an episode of a striking with a burning log.

B1 Grandmother strikes snake with burning log.

B7 Takiong strikes snake with burning log.

A similar episode occurs in H2, where the husband, in search of seed, is struck, by a demon, with a burning log. But there is an essential difference between B7 on the one hand and B1 and H2 on the other. In B7 the striking defeats the snake who holds back water, and thus produces a state of ordered periodicity. In B1 the striking causes the snake to take away water, a state where the order is disrupted. In H2 the striking entails the loss of seed, which may represent a loss of an ordered periodicity, not between earth and water, but between earth and sun.

B7	Striking leads to order	Earth - Water
B1	Striking leads to disorder	Earth - Water
H2	Striking leads to disorder	Earth - Sun.

The semantic reference of this striking with fire may be extended by taking into account the beliefs and practices of the Bugun when an eclipse occurs. An eclipse is also a disruption of natural order, like the lack of water. The Bugun believe that eclipses are caused by a great serpent, Ettong, who goes into the sky and seizes the sun or the moon. During an eclipse of the moon or a partial eclipse of the sun, they shout, beat gongs, and light fires. During a state of the total eclipse of the sun, they strip themselves of all their clothes and ornaments, and hide themselves under bamboo baskets. For they believe that at this time their clothes, ornaments, and domestic animals turn into demons, and try to destroy them. After the eclipse is over, they bathe. (Elwin, 1958, p. 41)

Three stages of the rite may be isolated, corresponding to stages of cosmic order or disorder.

1. The threat of disorder (partial eclipse, eclipse of the moon). This is met by noise and by fire.
2. Complete disorder (total eclipse). The Bugun attempt to protect themselves with containers, against demons.
3. The return to order (after the eclipse). This state is signified by water, in which they bathe.

The second stage will be left aside, for the present. The rest of the beliefs and ritual correspond directly to the role of thunder and

lightening in B7, in averting the state of disorder in which water is withheld.

Eclipse

Caused by a snake

Averted by noise and fire

Return to order signified  
by water.

B7 Lack of water

Caused by a snake

Averted by noise and fire

Return to order with the  
coming of water.

This suggests that natural disorder should be mediated by fire and noise, and that the return to order is signified by water. If B1 is compared with this, it is clear that the inverse takes place. After a "mediation" by the burning log, which corresponds to that which causes fire and noise in B7, a state of disorder arises in which water is lost. H2 is similar, with the transformation of water to seed, which may be due to the different connotation of water in the Hrusso system (cf. Ch. I). This leads to the replacement of the axis Earth/Water by that of Earth/Sun. If the result of the use of this mediator in B1 and H2 is the inverse of that in B7, the situation which it averts must also be inverted. In B1 and H2 the striking brings about a disruption of a situation in the sociological code. In B1 a husband is driven away from his wife, and in H2 a husband is separated from his wife, by being changed to an animal. If the two marriages are normal marriages, as has been suggested, then the striking in B1 and H2 is the wrong use of the mediator, to disrupt an ordered social situation, and for this reason produces a disordered natural situation.

Eclipse, Thunder (B7)		B1, H2
Natural disorder		Social order
Mediated	Fire, noise, burning log	Mediated
Natural order		Natural disorder.

In B1 and H2 order returns to nature by the mediation of the children. In each myth there is thus a state, in the middle, where the world is in disorder. This state might then be expected to correspond to State 2 in the eclipse ritual. This seems to be the case for H2. For in the time between the loss of relations with the Sun, caused by the failure to get seed, and their re-establishment, the children are threatened by evil spirits, who try to eat them. But in B1 the cannibalism which corresponds to this is that of the grandmother, which occurs on two occasions: once before the disorder caused by loss of water, and once after order has returned.

H2	Order	Disorder	Order
		Cannibalism	
B1	Order	Disorder	Order
	Cannibalism		Cannibalism

The cannibalism episodes in B1 are closer to the beliefs about the total eclipse, however. In the total eclipse, as in B1, containers invert their natural function. Humans are generally outside containers. During the eclipse they are inside, as the children of a human girl are inside the wooden box in B1. (The fish-children are also enclosed by a sort of container - the pool of water). In the case of the eclipse,



it is the things closest to humans which become dangerous; in B1 the grandmother is dangerous to "things" which should be close to her, her daughter's children.

It is suggested that if cannibalism, or behaviour close to it, is associated in Bugun belief and Hrusso myth with a "world out of order", the grandmother of B1, who is cannibal when the world is in order, must embody this state in herself. This is strengthened by the fact that B7 shows that the disorder of the world can be integrated in the regular periodicity of life and death. But the grandmother's "disorder" remains hostile. And she represents culture taken to its extreme. It seems that the Bugun attribute to culture a more uncontrollable disorder than that present in the worst manifestations of nature: drought, earthquake and epidemic.

The counterpart of the grandmother in Hrusso myths is either the benevolent Sun of H2, or the malevolent water-god of H1, who is not a cultural character, and who can be placated by sacrifice. In the Sherdukpen myth, S1, the grandmother is not evil, and the harmful force resides in the natural creature, the bad snake. It is suggested that the attribution of extreme harmfulness to culture in Bugun myth may be due to their position as a "suppressed class". They have always had a dependent status. They have had to work for the Hrusso, and have long been heavily in debt to the Sherdukpen. (Elwin, 1958, p. 433).

As the sufferers from the tendency of "exchange" to move towards the subordination of man to man, the Bugun may see the evils inherent in it. In reality they might condemn their overlords. But in myth it is possible to emphasise a conflict which cannot be admitted in other forms of communication. This is the conflict between exchange, as valuable, and exchange, as harmful. The myth emphasises that all culture may bring disorder to the world, since in any society it contains within it the seeds of the subordination of man to man.

#### Part Six - Balance in Society

In this part the analysis returns to<sup>a</sup>/theme of the first chapter, the difference between Bugun and Hrusso myths in respect of reciprocity in exchange, which have been correlated with their respective views of their society as consisting of groups which are too close, in the case of the Bugun, and too distant, in the case of the Hrusso. Connexions have been established between the sociological code, of marriage-exchange, and the natural, or cosmological code, in which periodicity is a fundamental category. It remains to be seen if there are any significant differences between the two mythical systems in respect of these correlations, which might throw light on those differences mentioned in Chapter I.

The return to incest at the end of H2 was dealt with in the first chapter, but it is now possible to put it in a new perspective. For

it occurs with the return of the cosmological and natural orders to a state of periodicity, signified by the giving of seed to man by the sun. The coming of seed re-establishes relations between the sky and the earth, and may be taken as a return of the fertilising power of the sun to the earth. It is also a life-death mediation, and thus emphasises the alternation between these two states in nature. The corresponding return of periodicity in B1 is accompanied by cannibalism, and it is significant that the transformation between the myths transposes this exaggerated conjunction from the sexual to the alimentary code, and thus avoids incest.

H5 is also a myth of periodicity, for it introduces the alternation of day and night, and brings death to men and animals. At the beginning of the myth there are too many Suns and Moons, and the world is threatened with extinction, permanent death. This threat is even more marked when the two rogue planets come to earth to make love. The act which brings about a change in this situation is the killing of the Sun's wife and the Moon's husband. It prevents the lack of periodicity(which will be referred to from now on as a state of continuity), by producing a state where the sky has the right number of planets, they can begin to alternate between day and night. Death can come, in its periodical form, to men. H5 has a sequel.

H6. Hrusso - The origin of thunder. (Elwin, 1958, p. 62)

Chou-Siphu and Khrao-Lijji were born of the great creature Phum-Badra who lives under the earth. After they were born they came from below to the surface. They killed the Sun and Moon who were doing evil on the earth and the arrows they fired still fall to the ground as thunderbolts.

Thus the prevention of continuity by the two heroes is made stronger, for thunder also prevents continuity by allowing the rain to fall. At the same time the two heroes affect the sociological scheme, for they prevent an adulterous union.

In B9 thunder and lightning comes when another irregular union is prevented, but in this case it is incest:

B9. Bugun - The origin of thunder and lightning. (Elwin, 1958, p. 60).

In the sky lived the girl Halia and the boy Haklum. Though they were brother and sister, they lived far away from one another, for both were virgin. But although Halia did not like boys, her brother was very fond of girls. The trouble was that, apart from his sister, there was no other girl in all the earth or sky.

So Haklum tried and still tries to make love to his sister. For fear of him she usually hides among the white clouds. But sometimes she comes out to wash her hair and it covers the sky and makes it dark. When Haklum sees this he knows that his sister is coming out and he tries to catch her. She is very angry at this and pulls the long pin from her hair and beats him with it. He runs away roaring like the thunder. Men on earth see the pin flashing as lightning across the sky. Sometimes Halia drops the pin and when this happens the lightning falls to earth and destroys a house or a tree.

If H6 and B9 are grouped together with H2, in which incest is identified with the restoration of periodicity, the following table can be set up:

set up:	Hrusso	Bugun
	Incest (H2)	
Restoration of Periodicity		
Prevention of Continuity	Prevention of Adultery (H5,H6)	Prevention of Incest (B9)

The gap in this table can be filled by B7. It has been shown that a complete periodicity in the realm of marriage-exchange is achieved in B7 by the mediation of nature, and that this corresponds to the periodicity of the natural world. The balanced unions in B7 are an adulterous union and a remarriage of an old man to a young wife. If the second is left aside for the moment the table can be completed

	Hrusso	Bugun
Restoration of Periodicity	Incest (H2)	Adultery (B7)
Prevention of Continuity	Prevention of Adultery (H5,H6)	Prevention of Incest (B9)

This scheme is reinforced by another variant of B7:

B10. Bugun - Creation of the world (2).

The human children of Apuphulwa and Muinini were called Assanga, who was the boy, and Arangma. When they grew up they wanted mates and went out to look for them. Though they travelled separately, they both went towards the East.

There was a great mountain: one side was called Kadampu, the other side was called Kadamlo. The girl went to live on the slopes of Kadampu and the boy lived on the slopes of Kadamlo. In those days everyone went about naked.

The boy made himself a shelter beneath a tree in which was a hive of bees. The bees flew over to Kadampu and when they saw the girl sitting there alone, they were filled with pity and discussed how to bring the two together. One of the bees went to the girl and settled on her body: it took a little scrap of her dirt and flew back to the boy. It put the dirt on the boy and he grew strong and was filled with desire.

Then the bee took a little of the boy's dirt to the girl and put it on her. It stung her and she was filled with desire. Presently, she found herself pregnant, and in due time a child was born.

The girl thought, 'There must be a man somewhere here, or how could I have become pregnant?' And she went out to find him. The boy thought, 'There must be a woman somewhere here, or how could I be so excited?' And he went out to find her. On the top of the mountain between Kadampu and Kadamlo, they met; they did not recognize each other and they came together.

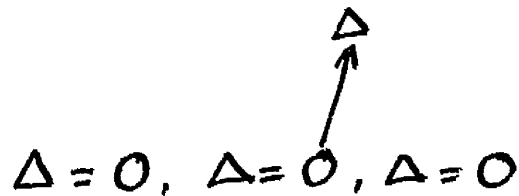
Assanga and his sister lived as man and wife on the top of the mountain, but after a time the girl died. Assanga went to find another wife, this time towards the West. After he had journeyed for many days he met an old woman. She had only one eye, one nostril, half a mouth, one arm, one breast and one leg. But there was no one else and he married her.

From this woman a rock was born first, then a male child: this was Haklum, who makes thunder in the sky. Then she gave birth to Sakatung, the God of Death: when he grew up he went beneath the ground where he shakes the world from time to time. Then there was another boy called Khawai, who later became Abua, the god of water. Another son was Chakmao, who gives rain

to the earth. And at last a girl was born; she was the beautiful Halia, who is afraid of men and causes the lightning in the sky.

In this myth, a true variant of B7, but also connected with B9, there is a significant transformation from adultery to incest. The incest occurs in two stages; in the first it is mediated, for the brother and sister are separated as far as possible. They are separated by a mountain, and the "intercourse" is the equivalent of plant-fertilisation, it is a sort of pollenation. The union becomes fertile, but the child is conveniently forgotten by the myth. This indicates that Bugun mythology is a true "transformation" of Hrusso mythology. The two systems run parallel for a time, but at the operative point, where incest has become fertile, the Bugun system deviates again, to oppose the Hrusso solution. It reflects the fact that the opposite solution to the one adopted is always present in the conscious or unconscious mind. The myth goes on to a real incest, but in this case the union is ended abruptly by the sister's death. Since this is another myth of periodicity, and incest is not a natural solution which makes marriage-exchange more balanced, the correlation of the prevention of incest with the prevention of continuity is reinforced. In this case both are prevented by the myth.

The second union in B10 is equivalent to the union of Apuphulwa and Nikauma-Madongma in B7, the only difference being the reversal of the age-differences. It is not adulterous, but it is the reverse of incest in another way; this enables the scheme to be extended. In an adulterous union, a person from outside the chain of matrimonial alliance takes away a person within it.



In the marriages of B7 and B10 both partners are outside the chain, one as an old man who has been married already in B7, or as a young man who has been married already in B10, and the other as a girl (or old woman in B10) whom no one wants to marry:

$$\Delta = O$$

$$\Delta = O, \Delta = O, \Delta = O$$

The common factor between these marriages and adultery is that they are both unions between very distant partners. This is emphasised, in the marriages, by the age-differences and by the differences between the partners, the man being whole, and the woman only half a woman. On the basis that incest is a union between very close partners, the table can be altered:

	Hrusso	Bugun
Restoration of Periodicity	Close Union (H2)	Distant Union (B7, B10)
Prevention of Continuity	Prevention of Distant Union (H5, H6)	Prevention of Close Union (B9, B10)



These correlations can be summed up in this way. Since there is a homology in the myths between the periodicity discerned in nature and that of marriage-exchange, one would expect only normal marriages to be correlated with this periodicity. This is the case in B1 and H2, where the loss of natural periodicity is contemporaneous with the disruption of normal marriages. But the myths also show that the balance of "normal marriages" is hard to achieve. The correct distance between partners, which is neither too close nor too separate, involves ambiguity; for allies are those who were enemies, and thus always move from distant to close. The unions in the table correspond to the periphery of the system. Here the Hrusso allow unions between close partners within the realm of periodicity, but reject unions between distant partners; the Bugun allow unions between distant partners and reject unions between close partners.

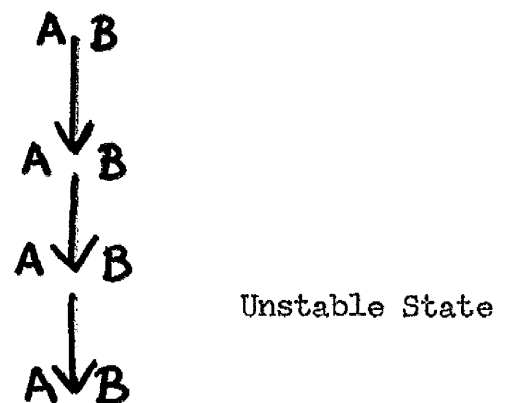
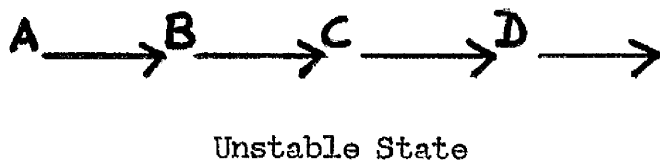
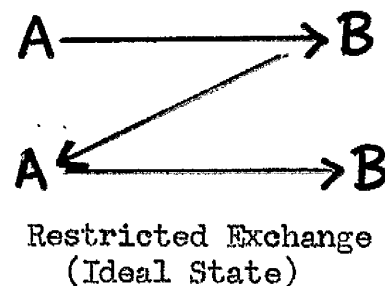
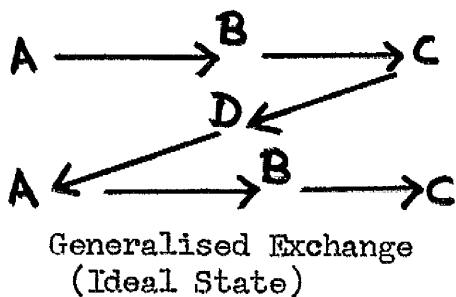
The category of periodicity adds another dimension to the difference. Lévi-Strauss' argument, referred to above, that all man's natural processes and social actions must be assigned a reasonable duration, to protect the periodicity of nature, clearly applies to marriage-exchange, one of the fundamental structures of culture, which is related both metaphorically and metonymically to the rhythm of nature. In its ideal state, exchange is an alternation based on a measured duration between giving and taking, between the integration of groups and their separation. In the mythical unions, where reasonable

intervals are not maintained, the Bugun err on the side of distance, the Hrusso on the side of closeness, while each vehemently rejects the opposite error.

The explanation of this must remain tentative, on the basis of the available material - the restricted number of myths, the poverty of information about marriage-systems, and the lack of any information about symbolic classificatory systems. It can be defended because it fits with the myths and with what information is available about marriage.

Exchange, in its ideal stable state, should not separate groups of wife-givers and wife-takers too much, nor bring them too close. In the long cycles of generalised exchange an element of hierarchy between groups always tends to be present. If that hierarchy becomes too pronounced, the social distance between the groups becomes too great for stability. This is clearly the case between groups at the top and groups at the bottom, who should theoretically complete the cycle. But it may also be true of groups which are only separated by one rung of the ladder. This seems to be the case for the Hrusso, where each group is jealous of its own status, and finds it hard to admit equality with other groups through intermarriage. This lengthening of social distance between groups is the equivalent of the lengthening of the periods in nature; the impulse, which should alternate between the poles, seems to go on in one direction, and periodicity is lost.

In restricted exchange the groups are always close, the alternations are between very close poles, so close that there is no cycle. This is the equivalent of an alternating current in which the periods are so shortened that the current seems continuous. It is known that the Bugun have a system of restricted exchange, without the refinement of sections based on the separation of adjacent generations.



It may be added that when simple systems change, restricted exchange systems are likely to adopt solutions which make groups more distant, the only other solution being endogamy, which is scarcely satisfactory in a small scale society. Generalised exchange systems may become complex, but complex systems are also unlikely except in

large societies. They are more likely to adopt the patrilinear solution or restricted exchange (which it seems the Hrusso do, to some extent).

This analysis is not concerned with historical development, but with logical structuring. It is argued that in a society in which the tendency is for exchange to bring groups too close or too make them too distant, there is present in the minds of the population the logical contrary to that tendency. This may be expressed in myths by the separation or unity of partners. The argument is similar to that of Lévi-Strauss: ". . . the three elementary structures of exchange, viz., bilateral, matrilinear and patrilinear, are always present to the human mind, at least in an unconscious form, and . . . it cannot evoke one of them without thinking of this structure in opposition to - but also in correlation with - the two others." (1969, p. 464). The opposite tendency may occur in "spectral form" in myth or in practices. This is the case for the Gilyak, who practise matrilinear marriage. Lévi-Strauss argues that the special role of the bride's mother's brother and the groom's father's sister, who would be parents-in-law to the bride and groom respectively in a patrilinear marriage system, is due to a nostalgia for the patrilinear solution. In a legend which Lévi-Strauss attributes to the Gilyak, the reflection of patrilinear, or bilateral marriage is evoked. A brother saves his sister from a bear, who has carried her off, and by whom she has borne a daughter. The brother then marries his sister's daughter. (ibid., pp. 304-309).

The proposed explanation of these myths of periodicity is that the Hrusso see their marriage system as tending to make groups too distant, the Bugun see theirs as bringing them too close. For the Hrusso the danger is that the exchange cycle will not be completed, for the Bugun, that exchange will be eliminated. In the myths these tendencies are signified by their opposites. Incest is seen by the Bugun as inimical to periodicity, distant unions are made part of it. The Hrusso condemn adultery in this context, but attribute incest to regular periodicity. This seems to compensate for the lack of balance in the marriage-systems. There is also a dialectic between the myths of the two populations. The mythical solutions of each society may be drawing closer to the marriage systems of the other, while vigorously inverting its mythical system. This may well be a conscious expression of each society's distinctiveness.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of myth is never really concluded. Mythical thought is itself interminable, and the analysis, which must imitate the myths, remains itself without an end. Each new myth suggests new axes to be explored, and confers new meanings on old axes. Even if some degree of meaning were attached to every mytheme in the myths of reference, numerous different levels of meaning would remain to be uncovered. This analysis has left many gaps, even in its myths of reference, because of its brevity and the paucity of the available material. It may, however, suggest some directions for subsequent analysis of these and other myths.

The essential tendency of mythical thought is to attempt to exhaust all possible solutions of any one difficulty. Thus it always seems to come back towards the same place, but is always on a different plane. The field covered here illustrates this tendency. In two major aspects, H5 and B7 present inverted reflections of H2 and B1. H5 and B7 are myths of the coming of Death. H2 concerns the origin of Life; it deals with the beginning of mankind and the origin of seed. B1 is, to a lesser extent, a myth of Life. It deals with fertilising water and a union between husband and wife. Secondly, there is a change from negative attitudes towards marriage exchange to positive attitudes. The Sun grandfather of H2 and the grandmother of B1 have

different attitudes towards marriage, but both are negative. In B7 equilibrium is bestowed on marriage exchange. H5 merely destroys a union, but it is one which endangers marriage and the balance of the world. The myths at the end re-echo the myths of the beginning, since the dichotomy between the closeness and distance of marriage-partners found in H2 is repeated, with new emphasis, in both the Hrusso and Bugun myths of the last chapter.

<div>Close unions</div> <div>Hrusso <u>                    </u> H2</div> <div>Distant unions</div>	<div>Close unions</div> <div><u>                    </u> H5,6 B7,9,10</div> <div>Distant unions</div> <div>(Hrusso Bugun)</div>
<div>Anti-marriage</div> <div>H2 B1</div>	<div>Pro-marriage</div> <div>B7 (H5)</div>
<div>Life</div> <div>H2 (B1)</div>	<div>Death</div> <div>H5 B7</div>

More significant conclusions have been drawn from B7, however. The analysis has been able to glimpse wider links than those between myths of populations known to be in contact with each other. It is possible to suggest that the myths of the Golden Age form a group which includes B7, and that the common understanding which may be gained of these myths is based on an internal and logical link. They are all variations on a theme, and can be related back, in some respects at least, to a

common logical model. It has been suggested that this model is the common way in which symbolic thinking determines man's view of nature, and that the myths relate the structuring process of man's thought to the objective properties of nature.

In B7 and the myths of the Golden Age it is also possible to see themes which relate back to the major theme echoed throughout these myths. The "reversals of structure" in B1 and the other animal-marriage myths result in the identification of humans with the worst characteristics of the animal world. This has been termed "antagonistic identification" and opposed to "compassionate identification" or "pitié", which Rousseau, and Lévi-Strauss, make the basis of man's ability to become cultural. B7 reverts back to this opposition. The child of death inverts the character of the grandmother of B1. She emphasises the separation of culture from nature; he emphasises their union, for he completes the natural rhythm, by bringing death, and he does so through language. She embodies disorder in herself; he becomes the cause and the victim of an order which verges on disorder, for man can never accept death as merely the end point of a natural alternation. She identifies herself with nature antagonistically; he identifies with it compassionately. For his weeping brings him to that humanity at the beginning of consciousness, to the identification of the self with the other.

The group of myths concerning natural periodicity, including



B7, emphasise that ~~man~~ ~~exists~~ only through equilibrium: equilibrium of nature and culture, and equilibrium between the human as identifying with the other and as distinguishing the other from the self. It has been argued that one message of the animal-marriage myths is that man must suppress his links with nature in order to become cultural, and that these links are both good and bad.

There is a permanent and fundamental conflict between the two ways of being human. One side of humanity is to put the world before man, to avoid the threat of identifying only with the self, by, in a sense, returning to nature. But, if man were to do this entirely, he would abandon his means of controlling, however slightly, the hostile side of his environment. He would constantly risk his precarious hold over his own life. The other side of humanity must also exist, by which man tries to control nature, by symbolic thinking and work. But in this man risks denying his links with nature, and losing the identification with the other on which symbolic thinking depends.

The myths, facing this conflict, cannot emphasise a return to a real nature. The Golden Age is a state of nature in which man is freed from the dangers of culture and society, from the need to work, to communicate, or to respect the incest prohibition. But he is also freed from the dangers of being natural, for he does not die nor make love. Myths concerning the loss of the rhythm of the world evoke a threatening nature, but it is no

more real. Man is human in neither sense.

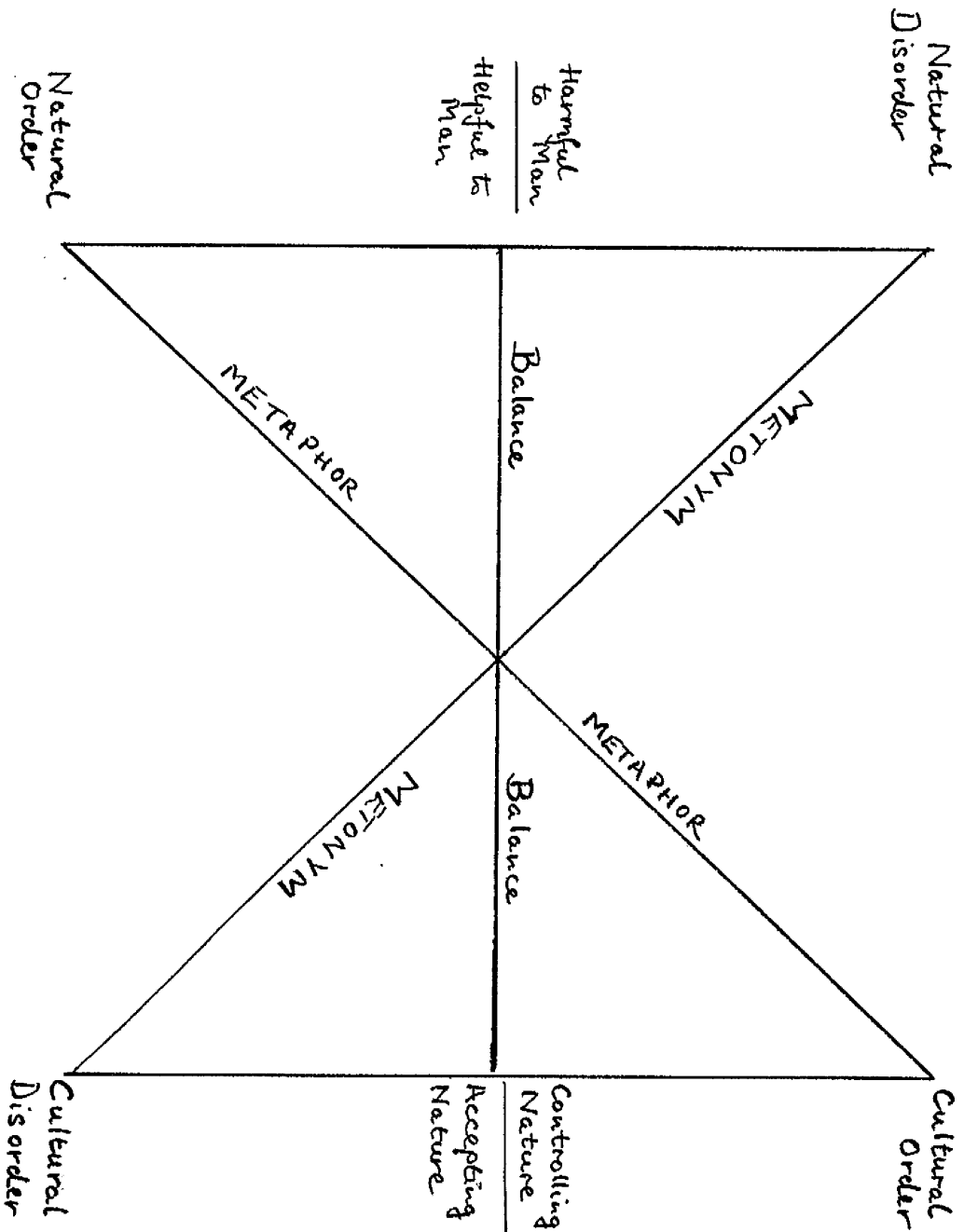
Both ways of being human present threats if they are taken to excess. The grandmother of B1 represents the threat of taking too far culture and symbolic thinking, an activity confined to humans. The child of death of B7 represents the ~~thra~~ threat of man accepting his links with nature excessively, through ~~the~~ identification with the other which is the condition of being human. The attitudes are opposites, but their consequences are essentially the same. To emphasise culture to the exclusion of nature is to identify only with oneself. Since this is incest in its wider sense, one ceases to be bound by the incest prohibition. And with the loss of identification with others, the capacity to distinguish is lost also. Communication becomes impossible, and there is a return to silence. In this state man would again be close to nature, but not a part of <sup>it</sup> except in a hostile fashion. For this incest and silence is completely intellectual; the emotional side of man, which has its roots in nature, is lost. The grandmother represents this state, because she identifies herself antagonistically with nature, while emphasising culture; and because at the end she is isolated. She insists on the cultural order, and brings about natural disorder.

Returning to nature entirely also entails the loss of

communication, and the loss of the capacity to distinguish. It is a return, for man, to the incest and silence of nature, which is completely emotional. The child of death represents this state. Through his weeping he identifies compassionately with nature. He uses language, but is incapable of communication, for everyone dies when he speaks to them. He brings about the culmination of the natural order, but only at the expense of disorder to culture and to man.

The diagram on the next page gives an approximate representation of this conflict.

(Grandmother)  
Antagonistic Identification  
(Identification with Self)



(Identification with Other)  
Compassionate Identification  
(Child of Death)

1. In the diagram, there are two points where man is identified with nature, in one case antagonistically, and in the other, compassionately. These are the exaggerated threats of the two definitions of the human. They occur at the poles of the two major oppositions: Natural Disorder/Natural Order, and Cultural Order/Cultural Disorder. Each polar state on each axis necessarily implies the opposite polar state on the other axis. Natural Disorder and Cultural Order are together in the grandmother of B1; Cultural Disorder and Natural Order are together in the child of death of B7. The polar states are exaggerated and dangerous, the intermediate state is one in which a balance is achieved between two views of nature—helpful and harmful—and two attitudes towards it—to attempt to control and to accept nature.

2. The diagonal lines are meant to indicate that the relations between nature and culture are never entirely metaphorical or metonymical. Order in Culture is related metaphorically to that in Nature; both Natural and Cultural Disorder may occur if the two are related metonymically: i.e. if man imposes his will on nature without respecting its rhythm. But man must always do two things: he must use natural objects and processes as metaphors, in symbolic thinking, and he must also attempt to control nature, in order to survive. Thus the point of balance is always between metaphor and

metonym. As in B7, relations between nature and culture must always be a mixture of the two.

In these two mythical characters, the failure of man's attempts to overcome the contradiction between these two aspects of humanity is admitted. Equilibrium yields to disorder. The myths admit the contradiction, not because they have no faith in "humanism", but because the very admission of a contradiction is its resolution. They admit it by metaphor, the fundamental means of mythical expression. The metaphor of the child of death is a perfect union of the sensible and the intellectual. It conveys, in the simplest form, a truth which could not be conveyed in any other way.

Lévi-Strauss has said that it is the desire to understand what aesthetic perception is which inspires curiosity towards myths. (Cited by Simonis, p. 311). To explain aesthetic feeling in logical terms is impossible. To <sup>attempt to</sup> do this would certainly <sup>evoke</sup> the futility of commentaries, in ordinary language, on music.

Structural analysis may be able to lead to an understanding of the intelligible side of myths by producing metaphors of its own; by repeating the message of the myths in new images, more comprehensible to an audience from a culture which does not elaborate its unconscious representations in this form. The audience may then be able to link this understanding to

the emotional power present in the myths, which is not confined in space or in time.

The attitude of structuralism appears naive and one-sided in many ways. Why does Lévi-Strauss emphasise the importance of "la pensée sauvage"? Why does he insist that man should acknowledge his links with nature, and identify himself with all other men, with animals, and even with inanimate objects? Must anthropology leave the age of Frazer only to pass back into the age of Rousseau? Clearly modern man cannot, and should not, deny all the benefits of scientific thought.

The view of structuralism as a metaphorical means of expression provides a partial answer. Just as myth may treat the contradictions with which it deals in any way, so long as it does deal with them, and repeats them, so structuralism must find new and startling metaphors to reveal the basic contradiction with which it deals; between that "human" involved in the processes of symbolic thought, and the "human" identified with the other. Just as myth cannot talk of a return to a real nature, but must invent a dream-world, so structuralism must emphasise an ideal state of nature, and talk of man's links with nature as perfect humanity. At times Lévi-Strauss idealises scientific thought also, for he visualises with perfect equanimity a science and technology far

in advance of its present state.

Structuralism is one-sided, as myth often is also, because the threat of the identification with the self alone, to the exclusion of the other, is a far more real danger than the threat of the loss of culture through acknowledging man's links with nature. But what is aimed at is a balance, not a return to nature.

The one-sidedness of structuralism does not constitute the negation of all anthropology, but neither is it a substitute for it. The study of the differences between societies, for their own sake, is essential to the advance of knowledge. It is facilitated by Lévi-Strauss' intuition that it rests on the basis of the assumption of the identification of the self with the other, and of the other in the self. Lévi-Strauss' representation of the synthesis of all the distinct contributions of different societies cannot exist without assiduous observation and analysis of these differences. This representation is essential to a complete and sympathetic understanding of man.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson      1969. "Sacred Fish." *Man*, N. S. Vol. 4. No. 3. (Sept. 1969)  
pp. 4436 to 449.
- Beier, Ulli.    1966. *The Origin of Life and Death*. London. Heinemann
- Elwin, Verrier. 1955. *The Religion of an Indian Tribe*. Oxford U.P.
- "        1958. *Myths of the North East Frontier of India*.  
              Shillong. North East Frontier Agency.
- "        1959(1). *India's North East Frontier in the*  
              Nineteenth Century. Oxford U.P.
- "        1959(2). *Art of the North East Frontier*. Shillong.  
              North East Frontier Agency.
- "        1959(3). *A Philosophy for NEFA*. Shillong. North East  
              Frontier Agency.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1956. *Nuer Religion*. Oxford U.P.
- Fox, Robin.    1967. *Kinship and Marriage*. London. Penguin.
- Frazer, J.G.    1963. *The Golden Bough*. (Abridged Edition). London.  
              Macmillan.
- Graves, Robert. 1955. *The Greek Myths*. 2 vols. London. Penguin.
- Hesselmeyer, Rev. C.H. 1868. "The Hill Tribes of the North East  
              Frontier of Assam." *Journal of the Asiatic Society*  
              Of Bengal. Vol. 37. pp. 192 ff.

Hubert and Mauss.1964.Sacrifice:Its Nature and Functions.

(Trans.W.D.Halls).London.Cohen and West.

Kennedy,R.S. 1914.Diary of the Aka Expedition.MS.India Office Library.London.

Leach,R.E. 1964."Anthropological Aspects of Language:Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse."IN Lennenburg,E.H.(ed. New Directions in the Study of Language,New York.

" " 1966.Rethinking Anthropology.London U.P.

" " 1967.The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism.A.S. 5. London.Tavistock.

Lévi-Strauss,Claude.1962.Le Totémisme Aujourd'hui.Paris.Presse Universitaires de France.

" " 1963.Structural Anthropology.New York, Basic Books.

" " 1964.Le Cru et Le Cuit.(Mythologiques I). Paris.Plon.

" " 1966(1).Du Miel au Cendres.(Mythologiques II).Paris.Plon.

" " 1966(2).The Savage Mind, London. Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

" " 1968.L'Origine Des Manières De La Table. (Mythologiques III).Paris.Plon.

" " 1969. The Elementary Structures of Kinship. (Trans.Bell,Sturmer,Needham).London.Eyre and Spottiswoode.

- MacKenzie, A. 1884. History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North East Frontier of Bengal. Calcutta.
- Mills, J.P. 1937. The Rengma Nagas. London.
- " " 1947. "Tours in the Balipara Frontier Tract, Assam." Man in India, Vol. 27. pp 9 to 35.
- Neel, A. David-, and the Lama Yongden. 1933. The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling. London. Rider and Co.
- Nevill, G.A. 1921. "Notes on Certain Frontier Tribes." Census of India. 1921. Vol. III. Assam Pt. 1. Report Appendix B. pp. xvxi ff.
- Roy, Sachin. 1960. Aspects of Padam Minyong Culture. Shillong. North East Frontier Agency.
- Sharma, R.R.P. 1961. The Sherdukpens. Shillong. North East Frontier Agency.
- Simoons, F. J. and E. S. 1968. A Ceremonial Ox of India. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Simonis, Yvan. 1968. Claude Lévi-Strauss, ou la "Passion de l'Inceste." Paris. Montaigne.
- Sinha, Raghuvir. 1962. The Akas. Shillong. North East Frontier Agency.
- " " 1964. "An Analysis of the Kinship Terminology of the Buguns of NEFA," Bulletin of the Tribal Research and Training Institute, Chhindwara. Vol. IV, No. 1. pp. 22 to 26.

- Tambiah, S. J. 1968. "The Ideology of Merit". IN Dialectic in  
Practical Religion. (Edited Leach). Cambridge U.P.
- " " 1969. "Animals Are Good to Think and Good to  
Prohibit". Ethnology. 8 : 4. pp. 423 to 459.
- Van Gennep, A. 1946 to 1958. Manuel De Folklore Français  
Contemporain. 9 Vols. Paris.
- Zimmer, Heinrich. 1946. Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and  
Civilisation. New York. Bollingen Foundation.

INDEX TO MYTHS

---

B1:Bugun. The Snake-husband.	30
B2:Bugun. The Tiger-child.(1).	58
B3:Bugun. The Tiger-child.(2).	60
B4:Bugun. The Bear-husband.	90
B5:Bugun. The incomplete wife.	96
B6:Bugun. The origin of the mithun.	138
B7:Bugun. The creation of the world.(1).	145
B8:Bugun. The origin of desire.	155
B9:Bugun. The origin of thunder and lightning.	182
B10:Bugun. The creation of the world.(2).	184
H1:Hrusso. The Water-girl.	41
H2:Hrusso. The Sun's daughter.	49
H3:Hrusso. The tiger and the frog.	62
H4:Hrusso. The origin of the mithun.	136
H5:Hrusso. The coming of death.	170
H6:Hrusso. The origin of thunder.	182
S1:Sherdukpen. The Snake-husband.	35
S2:Sherdukpen. The origin of fishes.	84
M1:Minyong. The marriages with animals.	112
M2:Minyong. The origin of seed.	127
Bori 1. The marriages with animals.	94
Bori 2. The origin of seed.	127